IMPLEMENTING DISCIPLINE TO DISCIPLESHIP IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

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ABSTRACT

IMPLEMENTING PERSONAL DISCIPLINE TO
DISCIPLESHIP IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

by
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This project was conducted in Milton United Methodist Church in Milton, Wisconsin. The problem is that members of Milton United Methodist Church have not been discipled, therefore preventing them from exercising certain spiritual disciplines. If members participate in a study about the relationship between discipline and discipleship, then they will change their views and attitudes of discipline related to Christian discipleship. The duration of this project was six weeks. Data was collected utilizing pre- and post- project surveys, focused individual interviews, and focused journaling. As a result of this class, participants changed their perspective related to discipline in discipleship.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

God has been so gracious to me by allowing me to embark on this journey to serve him in a greater capacity than I had ever imagined. He has used the doctoral program at United Theological Seminary to shape me and mold me even more. Praise be God for he has been good to me.

I would like to thank my wife, Ryn for allowing me and encouraging me to be on this journey. Her support for me and our calling has been one of the biggest blessings in my life. Thank you for looking over our children and trusting in the Lord. Thank you for never complaining about the snow that had to be shoveled or the rides you had to give while I was away. Thank you for accepting me as I am throughout this journey.

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Finally, I want to thank those in Milton United Methodist Church. You have allowed me to pursue this degree so that I can be a better pastor. For those who participated in the project, you have encouraged me so much through your comments and support. I have felt the love and grace of God in a way that I have never felt before.

DEDICATION

Soli Deo Gloria. Praise be to God for the people he has given in my life, for the experiences in my life, for redeeming the darkest parts of my life, and revealing the unbelievable grace that is through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BDAG	A Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature
NRSV	New Revised Standard Edition
UMC	United Methodist Church

I was thus beating the air. Being ignorant of the righteousness of Christ, which, by a living faith in him bringeth salvation to everyone that believeth, I sought to establish my own righteousness, and so laboured in the fire all my days. I was now, properly under the Law; I knew that the Law of God was spiritual;" "I consented to it that it was good. Yea, I delighted in it, after the inner man." Yet I was "carnal, sold under sin."

—John Wesley, *Wednesday, May 24, 1738 Journal Entry*

INTRODUCTION

By God's grace alone the journey of researching and my personal spiritual journey overlapped to reinforce my calling to contribute to the church and my context. The chapters, in order, are a journey that leads to proper Christian discipleship through understanding God's love and the discipline to live it out. What started as a polemic against the modern church and my context turned into a wonderful ministry opportunity as my individual experiences and Jesus' call to discipleship collided.

For this study, God's love is defined by the Hebrew word and concept, *hesed*. Out of the many meanings of *hesed,* the elements of mercy and steadfast love will be emphasized throughout this paper. Grace is defined as the unmerited divine favor to have a recovered relationship with God. Discipleship is referred to as the process of following what Jesus did in both deed and heart. Discipline is defined as a specific behavior done regularly and intentionally. Discipline in this paper does not mean training people to obey rules through negative reinforcement. This concept can be further divided into spiritual disciplines which include the discipline of prayer, engaging with the word of God, engaging God with community, fasting, and solitude. Personal disciplines are behavior that may not be considered traditional spiritual disciplines such as finances, time management, healthy habits, and self-improvement.

The Ministry Focus chapter highlights the core elements of discipleship. Discipleship can be distilled to the 'why' and the 'what.' The reason for starting the

discipleship journey with Christ must be based on an experience of God's mercy and repentance. However, just the experience alone does not lead to discipleship. It must be accompanied by the actions, or discipline, which lead to a deeper relationship with God. Hence, discipleship needs two legs to stand on: love and discipline. The project at its core is designed to help those understand the importance of these two legs but also their relationship to one another in an attempt to change their perspective on discipline in discipleship. An illustration of discipleship growth can be organized into two axes. The x axis is understanding God's *hesed* and the y axis is discipline.

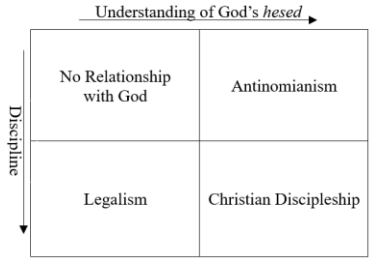

Figure 1. the Four Outcomes of Discipleship

The Biblical Foundation Chapter informs the topic of *hesed* as the beginning of the relationship with God. It serves to reinforce the idea of *hesed* as a start of a covenant relationship. It is a biblical case study on what happens if we are lacking in the area of understanding God's love. The Pharisees were a very disciplined group of people. They practiced all the right spiritual disciplines, but they failed to be disciples of Jesus. Rather, they mocked Jesus failing to recognize the need for *hesed* as the basis of discipline. Their rigor in discipline did not lead them to a proper relationship with God. The pharisaic way of thinking was analogous to some who believe that being a disciple is only about practicing the right disciplines. The need to realize God's *hesed* before anything else is

highlighted in this chapter framed by Jesus' teaching to the Pharisees as a need for confession of illness which leads to healing and relationship with God. This sets the tone for how we ought to approach discipline as it is clear by Jesus' use of Hosea 6:6 that *hesed* comes first.

The Historical Foundations Chapter serves as a case study of what can be possible when discipleship is based on God's love and a disciplined life. The genesis of the Moravian movement, which branched from the Pietist movement which shifted the framework of faith based on knowledge to faith based on experience. This historical movement shows that while *Hesed* may have led to the knowledge of God's grace, it was through consistent behavior, or discipline, coupled with God's grace that discipleship was experienced as a movement of the Holy Spirit.

The Theological Foundation Chapter proves the necessity of both God's love and discipline in discipleship. This concept is not a new one but one that has been mentioned throughout the generations by numerous reformers. The understanding of sanctification theology, not only in the Wesleyan tradition but in the Reformed and Lutheran traditions, show that there is always going to be an emphasis on both love and discipline. Sanctification theology provides the framework for moving into discipline after receiving God's loving mercy. This chapter was not written to parse out the differences between the theologians but, rather, to reinforce the notion of understanding the order of discipleship that starts with God's mercy and inevitably leads to discipline.

The Interdisciplinary Foundation Chapter becomes the bridge that allows us to equate personal disciplines with spiritual disciplines in our journey. It serves as a guideline for how to apply discipline in discipleship. As a framework of decision-making,

Behavioral Economics helps us understand why we do the things we do and not the things we ought to do. Many times, following Jesus is conveyed only as something to do because it is beneficial. While being a disciple of Jesus is absolutely the best thing we can do for our lives, Behavioral Economics shows the limits of this approach. The way that Jesus taught his disciples shows a clear parallel between the principles of Behavioral Economics and helps us understand why Jesus framed his teachings in the way he did. Behavioral Economics helps us better frame the decision-making process and offers a practical framework of the relationship between God's love and discipline in the discipleship journey.

Finally, the Analysis Chapter offers how understanding the biblical, historical, theological, and interdisciplinary foundations can change the way parishioners view discipline in discipleship. The project analysis offers a glimpse of how being informed of the correct relationship between discipline and *hesed* can lead into a change in how discipline is viewed in discipleship.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

Introduction

My goal in ministry was to become a pastor who shepherded the flock given to me by God to have a deeper relationship with God. I believed that having a deeper relationship would be the number one priority of anyone who confessed their faith in Christ. In my years as a mainline denomination pastor, I have felt a deeply rooted frustration in my ministry in the local parish. Despite all my efforts to preach Sunday Sermons related to a changed life and a change in behavior to follow Jesus, I felt that many congregation members were disinterested in developing a deeper relationship with God through spiritual disciplines. The question I kept running into was why are the members in my congregation claiming that they are Christians but do not exhibit any of the behaviors that reflect the followers of Christ in the Bible? How could they be so sure of a relationship with God when they would attend Sunday Worship service once every two months? What was their prayer life like when there was only one member in the whole leadership team that did not refuse to pray during the meetings? The problem I identified was that members of Milton United Methodist Church have not been discipled, therefore preventing them from exercising certain spiritual disciplines. As I will deal with in the context portion of this chapter, discipline was divorced from the concept of discipleship. A ticket into heaven was all that mattered, and discipleship took a back seat.

I do not believe that this is because some congregation members are incapable of carrying out discipline in their discipleship journey. Instead, they may not have understood the relationship between discipline and being a disciple of Christ. I hypothesize that if members participate in a study about the relationship between discipline and discipleship, then they will be equipped to equate the practical discipline from their lives with Christian discipleship. For my Doctor of Ministry project, I conducted a project to educate members to understand the deep relationship between discipline and discipleship in hopes that there would be a positive affective change in their view of the role of discipline in discipleship.

If discipleship is something that needs to be lived out, my underlying assumption is that finding the parallels between how we live out our day to day lives and discipleship could become a catalyst for a deeper relationship with God. The Apostle Paul mentions this parallel best through his letter to the Ephesian church as he compares the wives to the church and the husbands to Christ (Eph 5:22-24). [1] The purpose of salvation is so that we may share life with God through Christ. "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ."(Eph 2:13) There is a parallel between marriage which is a vital part of day to day living and discipleship in Christ. Marriage is, after all, two different people that get together to share life. It is striking to see that what makes marriages work in our personal lives is in line with what makes a good disciple. In the same vein, the same things that make marriages fall apart are the characteristics that many have been practicing as a church. Gottman mentions in his book *The Seven*

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[1] Unless otherwise indicated all Bible references in this writing are from the New Revised Standard Edition (NRSV) (US: National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America, 1989).

Principles for Making Marriage Work that the key to a successful marriage is not conflict resolution or communication skills, but the depth of a friendship the couple had.[2] I was shocked at how familiar the principles that Gottman gives in his book were to the concepts of discipleship and the shortcomings of the event based, church-centric ministry. We teach God's word every Sunday morning and we have seminars and bible studies; we cultivate skills to become a "good church," but we do not cultivate the things that build a depth of relationship with God. This has led me to believe that the reason for not living out a disciplined life as a disciple may be linked to the lack of connection to the necessity of self-discipline.

Terms related to discipline were clarified for the purpose of this study. Personal disciplines or discipline in life were defined as the consistent actions and behaviors needed to live life regardless of having a relationship with Christ or not. Setting time apart to talk with the spouse daily, making a budget and sticking to it, making sure that the intake of food is within a certain number of calories, and even clocking in and out of work at the right time are examples. Spiritual disciplines are the actions and behaviors which are done regularly outlined in Jesus' teachings and the Bible. These are disciplines that John Welsey defines as a means of grace as highlighted in his sermon titled by these very terms. Means of grace in the Wesleyan tradition are the discipline of prayer, searching for scripture and the Lord's Supper.[3] These also include the works of mercy and piety in a public and private setting. I am also supposing that there can be no depth of

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[2] John Mordechai Gottman and Nan Silver, *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work: A Practical Guide from the Country's Foremost Relationship Expert*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Harmony Books, 2015), 21.

[3] John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, 3rd ed., vol. 5, The Works of John Wesley (London, United Kingdom: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, 1872), 194.

meaningful relationship with God without discipleship in Christ. In other words, relationship with God is the very manifestation of Christian discipleship.

To implement this project, I led a training class with the following goals: 1) changing the perspective of faith from salvation-centered faith to discipleship-centered faith, 2) help understand the need for discipline in discipleship, 3) educate on the mechanisms of discipline and 4) note the changes, if any, regarding their views after the class had concluded.

Context

Milton United Methodist Church is like many other mainline churches that have seen steady decline throughout the years. Worship attendance in the early 2000s was around 140 to 160 attendees. After the pandemic, worship attendance in adults is approximately between forty to fifty attendees. From 2000 to 2020, the steady decline was already in place as the pre-pandemic worship attendance was around 100 to 120 people. The methodology of statistical reporting and exaggeration of numbers is unknown. The decline was even more pronounced than the overall decline of the protestant church which saw a nineteen percentage point, or 37% decline.[4] While members blamed the pandemic which saw the church close its doors for six months and a pastoral appointment change that led to their former pastor being appointed to a larger church just six and a half miles away, the bigger reason for the decline may be attributed to failing to live out the mission. The church was not exhibiting the behaviors of consistent disciples of Jesus Christ. The mission statement of the United Methodist

[4] Gallup Inc, "Religion," *Gallup.Com*, last modified June 8, 2007, accessed February 12, 2025, https://news.gallup.com/poll/1690/Religion.aspx.

Church is "to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Local churches and extension ministries of the Church provide the most significant arenas through which disciple-making occurs."[5]

The context seems to reflect the overall trend of lack of spiritual discipline in the broader evangelical landscape of America. According to a Gallup study on religious service attendance only 30% of protestants attend church consistently every week. Even when combined with those who answered almost every week, it will only be 44% of those who profess faith.[6] Less than half of the people who profess faith in Jesus do not practice the discipline of sabbath and are present for Sunday worship. There is a lack of discipline in something that would be no less than two hours of every week out of their lives. This is line with anecdotal comments by other pastors who jokingly talk about having one hundred worshipers every Sunday that are a different one hundred people every Sunday. A leader within the church mentioned the frustration of launching a contemporary service. There was a covenant with the launch group for the members to be present only to have a widely varied attendance from four people to forty people on any given Sunday.

Paragraph 122 of the *Book of Discipline* mentions the "Process of Carrying Out Our Mission" and outlines:

> —proclaim the gospel, seek, welcome and gather persons into the body of Christ;
> —lead persons to commit their lives to God through baptism by water and the spirit and profession of faith in Jesus Christ;
> —nurture persons in Christian living through worship, the sacraments, spiritual disciplines, and other means of grace, such as Wesley's Christian conferencing;

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[5] United Methodist Church, *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2016* (Nashville, TN: United Methodist Publishing House, 2016), para. 120.

[6] Gallup, "Church Attendance Has Declined in Most U.S. Religious Groups," *Gallup.Com*, https://news.gallup.com/poll/642548/church-attendance-declined-religious-groups.aspx.

> —send persons into the world to live lovingly and justly as servants of Christ by healing the sick, feeding the hungry, caring for the stranger, freeing the oppressed, being and becoming a compassionate, caring presence, and working to develop social structures that are consistent with the gospel; and
> —continue the mission of seeking, welcoming and gathering persons into the community of the body of Christ.[7]

The church cannot be welcoming without a discipline of presence in the regular meetings. A person cannot lead a life of commitment when there is no consistency of commitment. Worship, sacraments and spiritual disciplines are the hallmark of discipleship defined by the United Methodist bylaws. To change the world and its social structures takes consistent work and cooperation. There is no gathering of persons into the community without the gathering of those who are called to seek and gather. In a sense one of the easiest and most basic parts of living out a life of discipleship comes from attending Sunday worship. Yet there is a lack of consistency which may be due to the disconnect between church and what church is about.

Some members of the congregation were fully trusting that one is just "saved" regardless of how their lives are lived. They confessed their belief that Jesus Christ died for their sins or were baptized as babies and went to Sunday School. I have heard from at least five different people in the congregation that they believe being an active member in the church had nothing to do with having faith in Jesus. That is around 10% of the active congregation members that had mentioned a disconnect between discipline and discipleship. The purpose of faith was not about a meaningful change in life after meeting Christ but about where one would end up in the afterlife.

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[7] United Methodist Church, *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2016*, para. 122.

This was a result of an emphasis on grace without the emphasis on discipline. This may have been an overemphasis on justifying grace over sanctifying grace. This can lead to antinomian tendencies of the church and, in turn, lead to the decline of the congregation. Barna research had concluded that there are theolographic limitations in small churches. According to Barna, small churches are defined as churches who have an average weekend attendance of fewer than one hundred adults. In these small churches had proportionately less people who were "spiritually active" and practiced regular spiritual disciplines. They also were less likely to believe that their faith was "very important."[8] This research has been consistent with the small congregation that is the context. If the information about Christ that was conveyed to them was only about salvation and grace without the emphasis on Jesus' call to take up the cross daily to follow him, there would be less incentive to live a life of discipline.

There is also a movement that leads to antinomianism in response to legalism. Some in our congregation had experienced "church hurt" from fundamentalist views. There was a decidedly anti-fundamentalist attitude within the United Methodist Church. In the notes of the 1988 General Conference, there was a movement to take way fundamentalist tendencies in the approach to scripture. An elder regarding this issue mentions members of his congregation who have flocked to other churches in Bible studies "having learned scripture in a very poor fashion."[9] Finke and Stark critique the Methodist church by stating that they had fallen into a process known as "sect

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[8] Barna Group, "Small Churches Struggle to Grow Because Of The People They Attract," *Barna Group*, https://www.barna.com/research/small-churches-struggle-to-grow-because-of-the-people-they-attract/.

[9] United Methodist Church, "Journal of the General Conference of the United Methodist Church" (1968): 526.

transformation or secularization"[10] A movement away from fundamentalist beliefs and legalism can be a blessing but not if it leads to an erosion of the fundamentals of faith. D.A. Carson states, "We cherish the indiscipline of lost self-control and call it relaxation; we slouch toward prayerlessness and delude ourselves into thinking we have escaped legalism; we slide toward godlessness and convince ourselves we have been liberated."[11] We may have lost the fervor for discipleship in the process of critiquing legalism.

Regardless of the reason, a theme that emerged from the context was the lack of discipline and, in turn, discipleship in the local congregation. The project's primary goal was to address the issue of discipline in discipleship through the lens of two extremes that do not lead to proper discipleship. It addressed the possible reasons behind this issue as well addressing the issue of antinomianism - trying to have a relationship with Jesus without discipline. While having a solid foundation in God's grace through Christ is imperative, there can be no discipleship without discipline. Also, the project addressed the lack of discipleship due to legalism - discipline without a proper understanding of Jesus. The project highlighted that the discipline that leads to legalism was not the issue but the need to constantly be reminded in a disciplined life that was necessary for a proper relationship with Jesus.

Ministry Journey

One of the great blessings in my ministry journey was being able to teach English to non-native English speakers. As a native English speaker, I was tasked to teach

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[10] Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776 - 2005: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy*, 2nd ed. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers Univ. Press, 2008), loc. 1951.

[11] D. A. Carson, *For the Love of God (Vol. 2): A Daily Companion for Discovering the Riches of God's Word* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006), sec. January 23.

something that is unnatural to my students but was natural to me. I had to deconstruct English into the grammatical elements and reconstruct them back to teach non-native English speakers. One of the elements of faith that I grew up with, coming from a non-Christendom context was the idea that discipline was a necessity should one decide to follow Christ. Going to early morning prayer meetings, sitting in the church pews every Sunday, reading the Bible daily, giving a tenth of what I earned, offering the first paycheck as a first fruit offering was a natural part of my upbringing. I must confess, I was not consistent in doing all those things until recently but having those standards was a natural part of my upbringing. I had to deconstruct the concept of spiritual disciplines which came naturally to make the connection between discipline and discipleship. This was similar to deconstructing English which came naturally to me into grammatical elements.

I have also had a personal interest in finding patterns. What defines my preaching and what defined my teaching of English was the ability to find similarities in patterns and transpose them. I was known as the teacher who could find patterns in Korean that could easily be transposed to English when writing essays. My preaching is based on the patterns I see the characters in the Bible live out the patterns that I see myself live out in my daily living. It was recently when I received my bloodwork and saw my weight on the scale that moved me adapt to health disciplines. I no longer had the regimented environment where I could maintain my health by relying on the environment. I had to either rely on medication for the rest of my life or change my lifestyle to adapt disciplines in an effort to get my health back on track. It was during this journey I recognized the

remarkably similar patterns of disciplines for health and disciplines for discipleship with Christ.

The project was a convergence of these two skills and interests in ministry. In my deconstruction of spiritual disciplines, I realized that there must be a starting point, or a theme in scripture. This starting point must also lead to a pattern of discipleship and be analogous to a pattern of discipline in life. *Hesed* was the theme that best encapsulates my ministry philosophy which was formed by my life journey. It was not so much that *hesed* had defined my ministry journey per se. However, my ministry journey was about dealing with the pain that I had received. It just so happened that the greatest pain in my life came about due to the consequences of the lack of *hesed*. This in turn would start the journey on my view of discipleship. I saw what a misunderstanding and misuse of *hesed* led to. I identified three streams of *hesed* and its impact on relationships: 1) discipline without a relationship based on *hesed*. 2) a relationship without discipline, and 3) a relationship which needs both *hesed* and discipline. Discipleship is having a proper relationship with Jesus. If we understand relationships in a Godly way, this will lead to a proper roadmap of discipleship.

Hesed is a word that has troubled many interpreters and translators due to the wide breadth of the semantic range of the Hebrew word. There are nearly 250 occurrences of this word in the Hebrew Bible, most of them coming from the book of Psalms.[12] There have been numerous English words used to translate *hesed* and numerous English translations have translated the same instance of *hesed* in diverse ways. The Revised Standard Version committee had months of deliberation on how to properly

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[12] Michael Card, *Inexpressible: Hesed and the Mystery of God's Lovingkindness* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2018), 14.

translate this word until it resorted to 'steadfast love.' *Hesed* was translated into different words even in the LXX.[13] I believe that the biblical concepts of love and covenant cannot be divorced from the definition of *hesed* because of the pervasiveness of the word when such concepts are mentioned. Bullock mentions Glueck's work, which is quoted in many resources related to *hesed*, emphasized the covenantal nature and its significance in the study of *hesed*.[14] Since our discipleship is primarily based on the covenant relationship through Christ, *hesed* forms the very nature of discipleship. I believe that it was the lack of understanding of God's *hesed* that informed me of the issues of discipleship in the local church.

First is the existence of discipline but the absence of *hesed* in the relationship. While the relationship was sustained, it was not life giving and often looked burdensome. I looked at the broken marriage that my grandparents from my father's side had. My grandfather was a prominent pastor and was considered one of Korea's most influential revivalists. He was a disciplined man and committed to providing for his family. Yet my grandmother was deeply wounded in the process of her husband's ministry. My grandfather was a great spiritual leader, but his partner did not feel loved. The beginning of his marriage had more covenantal elements than modern marriages. His family had offered to give some compensation to anyone willing to marry my grandfather. It was standard practice at that time for many Korean families. However, lovingkindness, the fundamental idea surrounding *hesed*, was lacking.

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[13] Lester J. Kuyper, "Grace and Truth: An Old Testament Description of God and Its Use in the Johannine Gospel," *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 18, no. 1 (January 1964): 9.

[14] C. Hassell Bullock, *Theology from the Psalms: The Story of God's Steadfast Love* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2023), 48.

Hesed, especially in the stories surrounding David, was based on the relationship itself, not on covenant duties.[15] The reason for the failed aspects of this covenantal relationship was that it was not based on a relational covenant but a transactional one. Card mentions while talking about *hesed* in David and Jonathan that there must be a natural demonstration of *hesed* in return and a deep disappointment when *hesed* is received and it is not returned even if there are no formal covenant sanctions.[16] The disappointment exists not because one person did not hold their end of the bargain but because the relationship itself is broken when *hesed* is not returned.

It was my grandfather's duty to take care of his family financially. He was a good son by marrying my grandmother at such an early age for the sake of his parents. His obligation was as a provider, not a caregiver. He took care of his family in the best way possible as he became a military chaplain during the Vietnam War. I remember one of my teachers in Korea telling me how lucky my family was because we would have been able to have rice due to my grandfather's service. He did his best to be a pastor and was faithful in ministry. He was disciplined in making sure he met his end of the marriage covenant. However, I believe that it was not just a husband who met his duties that my grandmother wanted. She wanted a husband who would just love her because of her existence. This made sense in the traditional Korean church structure where the pastor's wife played a critical role in her husband's ministry. Yet, while she stayed faithful to her husband's ministry, something was amiss.

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[15] Card, *Inexpressible*, 15.

[16] Card, *Inexpressible*, 69.

While they did not even entertain the thought of divorce, I believe that it was not based on the covenant to take care of each other and deepen their relationship. It was based on the outer pressure of keeping the family intact for the sake of ministry. Every morning, I remember waking up to my grandparents arguing right after early morning prayer meetings. While they were aware of the covenant of marriage on the surface, they were not able to get a deeper understanding of *hesed* to take care of each other and love each other. They merely relied on the mechanism of marriage just like many people who disconnect discipleship with the *hesed* of God.

This led to experience of the opposite end of the spectrum: a relationship without discipline. The legalism that was apparent in my grandparents' marriage deeply affected my father. When he left my mother, he reasoned that he could not be in a relationship with my mother because he no longer loved her. He told me that he vowed to be in a relationship based on love because his parents were miserable together. While it could be an excuse, I believe that the dissonance of seeing a pastor fail to love his wife but doing all his duties, deeply impacted my father's view of marriage. This event had to have been the single most impactful event in my life from an outside influence. My parents' separation and eventual divorce changed the trajectory of my spiritual formation. It was my first visceral and genuine experience of a gray area of life and faith. It made me come to terms with the weight of promises but also how to contend with mixed feelings of betrayal and love. My parents were not around the household much and my father started an affair with his secretary. There were many "business trips" that my father took, and my mother was occupied with her career. There was clearly love at the beginning of their marriage. They both cared deeply for each other and helped each other study in the States.

Ironically, it was my father who encouraged my mother to start her career. Passion existed but not steadfastness. I believe that my father vowed to my mother that he would love her but without steadfastness, the relationship eventually stopped.

I believe that the relationship was broken because the premise of the covenant was not based on commitment but rather on the feeling of love. It was fleeting and thus, once the feeling of love left, the relationship broke. This event defined my ministry because it dealt with the very character of God. If God is love (Jn 4:8), the definition of love will dictate the way we view God. It affected my father's logic. He believed that to love our neighbor, we must first love ourselves. According to his definition of love, if one could not take care of their own needs first, it would be impossible to love others. He needed to take care of himself first. That led to the idea that it was better to cut ties with his wife, for whom he no longer had any feelings of love. This logic had immense implications for my theology and view of God. I knew his logic was flawed but I could not unpack why it was wrong. A major thread in my ministry journey was to be able to define what godly love looked like.

My father's logic was counter to how Christ lived out his love. He was not looking after his interests first when he died on the cross for our sins. It was not until I came across the Hebrew word *hesed* (חֶסֶד) that I was able to grasp why I could not accept my father's definition of love. His definition had become the premise of his covenant with my mother, but it was broken because of the flawed premise. He defined love in his own terms and based it on feeling it. God's love as can be seen by the word, *hesed*, was

steadfast. In the book of Exodus, God reveals not only his rich and abundant *hesed* but also that he maintains his *hesed* as well.[17]

I look at my own marriage and came to realize that when our marriage was life giving, it was because both *hesed* and discipline existed. I was terrified at the prospect of marriage in a way because I did not know if I could love or if I could be steadfast and faithful. I overcompensated with the idea of being steadfast and faithful without fully understanding *hesed*.

This leads me to where to my current place on ministry journey as my wife and I are recovering from a covenant relationship that lacked mercy. This is ironic in two ways. First, is that God called me to pray for a spouse who would let me know and learn more about his love. Yet I was oblivious to God's *hesed* – the very thing that God had called me to pray about. Second, I had missed the most important part of God's *hesed* at the beginning of my covenant relationship with my wife. I remember fondly when my basics of faith were formed through the Westminster Shorter Catechisms. While my theology and beliefs have shifted from a Reformed background, it was through catechism while in college that I understood the larger message of the Bible, which was a story of love, for the first time. The experience of understanding the power of scripture, Christ, faith, and grace was life changing. However, grace and mercy were not found at the beginning of my marriage.

In the LXX, *eleos*(ἔλεος) is one of the most frequent translations of *hesed* and is commonly translated as mercy.[18] In the Gospel according to Matthew, Jesus says I desire

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[17] Card, *Inexpressible*, 30.

[18] Karen Nelson, *Ḥesed and the New Testament: An Intertextual Categorization Study* (University Park, PA: Eisenbrauns, 2023), 1.

eleos and not sacrifice. Card translates this quote as "I desire *hesed.*"[19] Mercy was deeply embedded in the very premise of God's love for us that Christ wanted to show us. I was more intent on showing sacrifice rather than mercy in my relationship with my wife. I had always had an insatiable thirst to prove my worth to others. It was not merely about feeling good when I had done better than others, but I realized that it was the need to be better than others that dictated my actions. I had to know that I was better than others. In my professional life, I always struggled with arrogance that stemmed from wanting to be better than the person next to me. Once I realized I was better, it turned into arrogance. While working as an instructor, the thirst for being better took a toll on my life. When my monthly income surpassed the yearly salary of many of my friends and peers, I thought it would be enough. Every time I made more; I saw someone who made even more. It was an unending hamster wheel that I put myself in. I was putting money instead of being present, trying to solve my marital issues and lack of availability for my kids. I look back and I know that I did not give nice things to my family for them. I needed to know for myself that I could provide nicer things than what my brother or my peers could provide. I would offer sacrifices to myself and for my wife, but I would not offer mercy. I would be confused about why my sacrifices were not enough. I realized that in both of our lives, we needed mercy. My marriage would almost fall apart until I realized just how much my wife had to forgive me to live with me. I needed to realize the mercy that I needed to give myself for not being better than people next to me.

My relationship with my wife is what shaped my spirituality the most. My view of marriage was more practical than anything else after my experience of seeing the

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[19] Card, *Inexpressible*, 106.

marriages of my grandparents and parents. I felt that I did not have a home and thought that marriage would be the next step in starting my own. Marriage reflected the worst parts of myself, but it became the best thing that would happen to me. My prayers would be answered, and I would learn about God's *hesed* without even knowing the term existed until I learned Hebrew in seminary. I learned about mercy in my marriage. I learned the complexities of forgiveness, grace, and humanity through my marriage. I also started to understand and process what happened with the failed marriage of my parents when I realized mercy. It was only when I realized this that I was able to properly form the discipline necessary to improve my relationship with my wife. My spiritual and ministry journeys would converge into the theme of understanding *hesed*.

The Synergy

In my ministry, I realized I had, internally, been bothered by members who did not take their vows seriously. It is not so much that they lived a life of sin that bothered me as we are all in need of God's grace but the very fact that they would say the membership vows in front of others and in front of God, but act like they had not made any vows at all. It troubled me deeply when parents would want to baptize their children without having attended worship or being part of the church community. Having a look back at my ministry and spiritual journey, I realized that there was a deep wound stemming from broken relationships. These wounds were not only experienced by me but passed down for multiple generations. I was sensitive to people who would make or say covenant vows as a ritual because my family experienced brokenness when a relationship became a mere ritual. I was discouraged greatly when I saw members want to live out

their vows only to give up soon after, just as my father was once eager to live out his covenant with my mother only to let it go later in life. This led me to this project where I wanted to explore how we can live out our relationships better with Christ.

Covenants in their most exact meaning are namesake of our Bibles as they are separated into the old covenant and new covenant. It would be an understatement to say that covenants build the backbone of our Christian faith. However, covenants without the understanding of God's love would be reduced to a book of rules and stipulations. God's word would be mere moral and ethical guidelines at best and a scale we can ever outweigh condemning our fate at worst. It is not enough to understand the biblical concept at an intellectual level. Only when we understand discipline in conjunction with God's love, can we start to grasp the depth of deep relationships that are lived out through discipleship. I wonder what a church would look like if the parishioners who respond with a resounding "amen" to vows understood how seriously God took his covenants with Abraham and David for the sake of a relationship with them.

A common critique from within the UMC is that the standards and expectations of the laity have been continuously lowered. The conduct that is acceptable in the church is not that much different than the world around us. In our move from extreme legalism, something was lost in the process. There has been a trend in the general reluctance to enter covenant relationships in the world and sadly, our churches are following that trend. According to Pew Research, the percentage of 40-year-olds who have never been married increased from 6% in 1960 to 25% now.[20] I understand the constant pressure from pastors

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[20] Richard Fry, "A Record-High Share of 40-Year-Olds in the U.S. Have Never Been Married," *Pew Research Center* (2023). https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/06/28/a-record-high-share-of-40-year-olds-in-the-us-have-never-been-married/.

to cater to their parishioners who have been becoming increasingly reluctant to commit. One of the basic tenets of the Christian faith is to commit. Jesus calls us to turn our hearts (Mt 3:2) and take up our cross to follow him (Mt 16:24-25). God's commitment to his relationship with us is shown through the death of Christ on the cross. The seriousness of relationships is shown through blood sacrifices. The required patience and commitment are shown through God's forgiveness repeatedly when the Israelites turned away from God. It makes me wonder why believers and followers of Christ fail to live out a life of discipleship. A church should not hold members accountable for things that were not communicated clearly to the parishioners. The project was designed to see the effectiveness when discipline and God's love can be communicated properly.

I believe that my context was an ideal environment to see if a deeper understanding *hesed* and discipline could lead to deeper discipleship. I was curious to see if there would be a shift in perspective and if members could move from a church-centric to a discipleship-centric spiritual life. The church had become so caught up in the institution of the church being a disciple became difficult. The project would address the question of whether parishioners used to an institutionalized and program-based church can pivot rapidly to practice spiritual disciplines.

I was often left wondering why discipleship is lost in today's church. I believe that there must be some correlation to the understanding, or lack thereof, of grace and discipline. The more church members understand *hesed* and discipline, the more likely that members will practice spiritual disciplines in a life-giving way. I was excited to see what this project held hoping it will surely give me direction into leading my congregation to whatever God had in store.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

Navigating legalism and antinomianism is exceedingly difficult. Some have adapted stringent rules like the Pharisees without the understanding of God's mercy. It seems clear that Jesus wants us to carry his cross to be his disciples who are set apart from the world, yet there is a profound sense of grace that often leads to a disregard for the praxis of discipleship. It can be difficult for churches to find a balance. Some shun others with the guise of tradition and biblical authority. At the same time, some do not bother to apply any biblical principles at all and have a challenging time with accountable discipleship making. The question is how we can land on the proper path of discipleship where we are imbedded in both God's mercy and discipline. It is not a matter of balance of grace and discipline but, rather, the order of which comes first is imperative to understanding Christian discipleship. The biblical concept of *hesed* is a key component in understanding discipline in discipleship. It serves as the starting point and the reason for adopting discipline to begin with. This chapter will deal with Matthew 9:9-13 to give a biblical basis of the proper order of becoming a Christian disciple.

The calling of Matthew highlights the tension that exists between God's laws and grace. Jesus quotes Hosea 6:6 which is a passage that deals with not only *hesed* which best embodies the Hebrew and biblical concept of love, but it is within the context of the

covenant relationship that God has with his people. The characters involved in this biblical text offer a parallel to many parishioners and church cultures. When the themes of *hesed* and covenant are amalgamated into the characters, one can gain a better understanding and pathway of a balanced view of the cost of discipleship and grace.

My translation of the pericope is as follows:

9 As Jesus was passing by from there, he saw a man named Matthew who was sitting at the tax booth. Then he said to him "Follow me." After getting up, he followed him. 10 Afterward, while Jesus was dining in the house, behold many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. 11 Having seen (what was going on), the Pharisees said to his disciples "why does your teacher eat with the tax collectors and sinners?" 12 However, having heard (what they said), he said it is not those who are healthy that have a need for a physician but those who are sick. 13 but go and experience what this is "Mercy I desire, not sacrifice." For I did not come to call the righteous but sinners.

There is an obvious juxtaposition between Matthew, tax collectors, and sinners versus the Pharisees. The dichotomy is a parallel to one of the problems that plague the modern-day church. There are those who come to Christ that have heard God's commands but do not make the effort to keep them. There are also those who practice tremendous discipline but do not exhibit Christlikeness failing to accept those who do not follow the same standards. While it is easy to think that Jesus is condemning the Pharisees and accepting the sinners and tax collectors, the command that Jesus gives at the end to the Pharisees shows that there is an equal invitation to them. That is, Jesus invited not only Matthew who was a "sinner" but also the Pharisees as well. Hence, this

is a passage that shows Jesus' invitation for all to come into a proper discipleship and, in turn a perfect relationship with God through him.

This chapter will analyze the pericope through the lens of covenant, *hesed*, and discipleship through 1) contextual analysis, 2) a detailed analysis of the text, 3) thematic analysis, and 4) the synthesis of main themes and how this text can be interpreted and applied to the issue of understanding God's love biblically in the church.

Contextual Analysis

We must first look at the historical context of Matthew. The main concern is the likelihood that the original audience of Matthew was a Jewish audience. This is evidenced by the writing of Jewish customs without explanation, which contrasts the gospel according to Luke in which Luke specifies an audience.[1] If Matthew had the Jewish audience in mind, it would be an assumption that the readers of this gospel story would have been a people who should already be in a covenant relationship with God, unlike the gentile audience who would have been looking into entering a covenant relationship. D. A. Carson emphasizes this in his commentary about Matthew, that Matthew's writing was about the "dramatic change of covenant."[2] There is a difference between redefining a covenant and entering into a covenant. The original audience of Matthew would have been challenged to rethink the idea of the covenant. The lines of those who are excluded would have to be redefined. Redefining the covenant is imperative as it affects the reason for having a disciplined life.

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[1] Gary M. Burge and Gene L. Green, *The New Testament in Antiquity: A Survey of the New Testament Within Its Cultural Contexts*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020), 206.

[2] D. A. Carson, *God With Us: Themes from Matthew* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009), 8.

The second matter is the issue of looking at the tax collector in the historical context. The tax collectors would have been a part of the Roman governing system which was implemented in Judea as an annexed Roman province. However, the unique circumstances of the Jewish people would have lent itself to having some say in their governance. The state allowed religious communities to have their jurisdiction. Since ethnicity and religion were tied so closely together, the Jewish community itself would have had some level of autonomy.[3] The Pharisees who were leaders of the religion would have naturally been at odds with the tax collectors because they were a part of the Roman government system. The animosity towards the tax collectors by the Pharisees was not just tied to the lack of keeping God's covenant. There was a considerable power dynamic that could not be ignored as well.

The tax collectors were a part of the covenant community. They would have been the native population subcontracted by the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire would do this intentionally to prevent deception by utilizing the knowledge of the people who were present with only locals.[4] It would not be a stretch to assume that tax collectors occupied the exact opposite sphere than the Pharisees and were universally hated by the masses. They used their inside knowledge of the community to collect tribute to their conquerors. Not only were the tax collectors exploiting their knowledge of their own people, but the position also was prone to abuse and malpractice. The position also required continual contact with Gentiles who did not have the concept of the Sabbath, making tax collectors

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[3] Shaye J. D. Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 3rd ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014), 103.

[4] J. H. Harrop, "Tax Collector," *New Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed. Edited by D. R. W. Wood and I. Howard Marshall (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 1155.

ceremonially unclean and violators of the Mosaic Law. [5] If there was one group that violated the most amount of biblical and godly principles, it was the tax collectors.

We must also gain a better understanding of the Pharisees. It is not as simple as discounting this group because of accounts of rebuke that they received from Jesus and John the Baptist. It is easy to dismiss them as hypocrites who were called by John the Baptist as a "brood of vipers." (Mt 3:7) The name itself implies the separatist tendencies of this group. The name Pharisee comes from the Hebrew word "**פרוש**' (*parush*), which means separatist.[6] To be a Pharisee is to be a separatist. What is surprising is the political and public clout of this Jewish sect. Historical records show certain Romans were instructed to befriend the Pharisees due to their political power.[7] At the time when the writing of Matthew was taken place, the Pharisees would have been at peak power among the masses as well. The way that they carried out the rituals and with some 6,000 members mostly consisting of people from the masses - not the aristocracy like the Sadducees[8] - would have given them great support from the Jewish population. The Pharisees seem more like a group of people who were from the people and for the people. At the very least, we must be careful not to dismiss the Pharisees as just a group whom Jesus rebuked.

One of the reasons for the political and social standing of the Pharisees was the reluctance to accept foreign concepts and people from Hellenization. The Pharisees added

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[5] Harrop, "Tax Collector," 1155.

[6] Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 159.

[7] Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 143.

[8] Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 144.

laws to keep their ethnic identity.[9] It is much easier to identify the Pharisees as those who yearned for freedom by keeping their ethnic identity intact. The Pharisees limited their contact with people who did not follow their ways. They ate among themselves and took extra steps when visiting a property or buying from outsiders. These actions reflect the nature of the ethnocentric cultures of the time.[10] It is important to be able to look at the Pharisees as a group that took the covenant with God very seriously. So much so that the idea of being 'set apart' from the Old Testament had become extreme and tied in politically and sociologically due to the constant foreign occupation of the Palestine region. Unlike the tax collectors who had lived lives that broke the covenant relationship, the Pharisees were those who went through extreme discipline to keep the covenant. The narrative of the Pharisees in the gospel according to Matthew may have been to highlight Jesus' ministry and the new covenant by showing that the issue is not about being set apart it is about how we are set apart.

To better understand the meaning of the story, the literary context of where the pericope is introduced is critical. The interpretation of the text must stay within the boundaries of Jesus' authority and the kingdom that Jesus ushered in through his incarnation and ministry. The text fits in the section deemed by most commentators as the portion about authority and kingdom. Carson sees this story as a part of "the Kingdom Extended Under Jesus' Authority."[11] Hauerwas puts this story under the "Power of the

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[9] Burge and Green, *The New Testament in Antiquity: A Survey of the New Testament Within Its Cultural Contexts*, 64.

[10] Gerd Theissen, *Sociology of Early Palestinian Christianity* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1978), 80–83.

[11] D. A. Carson, *Matthew*, ed. Tremper Longman and David E. Garland, Revised. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 8:1-10:4.

Kingdom."[12] The story of Matthew is a part of "the Authoritative Deeds of the Messiah" according to Hagner and Metzger.[13] The authority of Christ and the Kingdom that is ushered is presented through two means before the text.

First, it is the author's reference to the Old Covenant. Matthew 8:14-17 is relevant as it shows the climax of Jesus' healing ministry as well as its link to the Old Covenant. As Jesus heals many, he references Isaiah 53:4. Matthew establishes the cost that Jesus bears to become the healer[14] that Jesus claims to be in the text. The view of Jesus' healing ministry as a fulfillment of a prophecy is also unique in Matthew's gospel.[15] We can look at the text to see that the interaction that Jesus has with Matthew and tax collectors is also a recognition of the fulfillment of the covenant relationship and a fulfillment of love that comes through what Jesus would bear for sinners that he was dining with.

Second, there is an expansion of the meaning of Jesus' healing ministry as other commentators mentioned related to the story of the paralytic right before the text. There is an eschatological heightening occurring as the stories of Jesus' healing evolve into not only the healing of the paralytic but also the forgiveness of sins. It is in this context that we must read the calling of Matthew and what Jesus meant when he mentions that the sick need a doctor. The author leaves room for a larger semantic range of κακῶς by using the heightening story of healing that is inextricably linked to forgiveness. The covenant

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[12] Stanley Hauerwas, *Matthew*, Brazos theological commentary on the Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006), 93.

[13] Donald A. Hagner and Bruce Manning Metzger, *Matthew 1 - 13*, ed. David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker, Nachdr., Word Biblical Commentary Vol. 33,A (Nashville, TN: Nelson, 2008), 195.

[14] Hauerwas, *Matthew*, 95.

[15] G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, eds., *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 30.

relationship with God through Christ is being redefined by this text as well as the meaning of Hosea 6:6 which was quoted by Jesus.

Finally, the literary context of Hosea 6:6 must be looked at as well. While there is still a debate on whether any reference to the Old Testament brings the context or if it is used as proof-texting, Carson understands that there is a nuanced distinction that can be made. He seems to believe that both can be used and need to be parsed out through looking at the different contexts of the New Testament text.[16] There is ample evidence from the literary context within Matthew to draw the parallels of the literary context of Hosea to believe that, at the very least, what is parallel to Matthew's organization of events is relevant.

Hosea 6 is a song about the renewing of God's people. The typological interpretation of verse 2 points to Jesus and his resurrection but also the requirement of "living in his presence and knowing him."[17] Glenney concludes after the analysis of verse 3 in the LXX, that the knowledge of the Lord and a relationship with the Lord are closely linked.[18] These two verses have a strong parallel to verse 13 as Jesus tells the Pharisees to "learn" the meaning of Hosea 6:6. The use of μάθετε, which will be analyzed in depth later, shows the need to fully live in the presence of the true teacher. It is the Pharisees who are lacking a vital component in the relationship with God. They did not live in God's presence and failed to live out the covenant relationship with him because they did not truly know him. Just as it was God's invitation to his people in Hosea to renew the

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[16] Beale and Carson, *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, xxvii.

[17] Douglas K. Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 108.

[18] W. Edward Glenny, *Hosea: A Commentary Based on Hosea in Codex Vaticanus*, Septuagint commentary series (Boston, MA: Brill, 2013), 112.

covenant relationship through living with and knowing God, Jesus invites the Pharisees to renew the covenant relationship in the same way.

The restoration comes to those who have violated the covenant. Andersen and Freedman mention verse 4b as a metaphor for the "failure of *hesed*" by God's people.[19] Like the ground fog and dew, the *hesed* of the people are temporary and show the disloyalty of God's people.[20] It is interesting that in the context of Matthew, both the tax collectors and the Pharisees have failed in the same way. The tax collector has failed through the abandonment of God's promise to serve the Roman Empire. The Pharisee has failed even though in his outer appearance he may seem faithful, he refuses to be restored by God and aims to be restored through their self-righteousness. It is in this context that Jesus' quoting of Hosea 6:6 must be looked at more closely.

Analysis of the Text

First, the author's use of conjunctions highlights the importance of *hesed* and covenant relationship within the text. The conjunction καὶ at the start of the text shows the strong bond between Jesus' healing and forgiveness of the paralytic in verse 9. It is important to see the passage in light of Runge's view that καὶ should be seen more as a connective which represents a continuation of the discourse rather than a conjunction with only a grammatical purpose. Runge mentions "the use of καὶ constrains the connected element to be closely associated with what comes before, ... The implication is

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[19] Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman, *Hosea: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Yale Bible Commentaries 24 (New Haven, MA &, London, United Kingdom: Yale University Press ; Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021), 426.

[20] Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 109.

that the elements joined by Kai are of equal status."[21] All verses start with καὶ until Jesus' response in verses 12 and 13, both of which use the conjunction δὲ. This is significant as δὲ adds on to the meaning of καὶ by adding a new development. While some translations use the English conjunction 'but,' the limit in the English language does not fully reflect the nuance of the Greek conjunction. δὲ is more than a contrasting conjunction. Runge views this as an explicit signal used by the writer to show a "distinct development in the story."[22] A comparison given by Runge of Matthew's gospel versus Mark's gospel of the same story shows Matthew's tendency to use conjunctions to develop the story and highlight the climax of the story.[23] The climax of the story of calling Matthew to become a disciple and the grumbling of the Pharisees was for Jesus to show the need for a physician for the sick. By adding another δὲ, the author further develops the idea of God's desire for *hesed* in the covenant relationship by quoting Hosea 6:6 and developing the concept of what Jesus means by the "sick" in verse 12 to "sinners" in verse 13.

v9 - As Jesus was passing by from there, he saw a man named Matthew who was sitting at the tax booth. Then he said to him "Follow me." After getting up, he followed him.

The issue of whether Matthew is the Levi in the other gospel accounts is debated. While this debate itself is not relevant to the idea of covenant love, the idea of authorship by Matthew strengthens the idea of what Jesus means when he says that he came for the sinners and that God desires mercy. One of the arguments that Carson gives for why he

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[21] Steven E. Runge, *Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament: A Practical Introduction for Teaching and Exegesis*, Lexham Bible reference series (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers Marketing, 2010), 26.

[22] Runge, *Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, 31.

[23] Runge, *Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, 33–35.

believes that Matthew is Levi, is the self-deprecating nature of this account. Luke mentions that Levi "left everything" while Matthew writes that he "got up."[24] We must keep in mind that Matthew puts himself with those who were considered the sick and sinners.

There is a foreshadowing of what is to come, Matthew is sitting at the tax booth until Jesus calls him to "follow me." Ἀκολούθει is in the present imperative. While it can be seen as a command for a lifetime of discipleship,[25] imperatives have more of a mood of intention, making them express an exhortation.[26] Matthew's rising up and following is not a result of a command, but a decision made by Matthew to leave everything behind to follow Jesus. It makes sense that the start of the story is about a disciple who has decided to live a life with Jesus and closely mirrors Hosea 6:1-3. Matthew needs to "return to YHWH" (Hos 6:1a) and needs healing. The command to follow is so that Matthew "may live in his presence." (Hos 6:2c) Matthew's decision to rise and follow is to "acknowledge YHWH." (Hos 6:3a) The story of Matthew is a story of a restoration of a covenant relationship just as the song in Hosea is a song about the restoration of a people who have denied the covenant by neglecting the duty to show *hesed* toward the Lord.

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[24] Carson, *Matthew*, 9:9.

[25] Grant R. Osborne and Clinton E. Arnold, *Matthew*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary Series on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 335.

[26] Andreas J. Köstenberger, Benjamin L. Merkle, and Robert L. Plummer, *Going Deeper with New Testament Greek: An Intermediate Study of the Grammar and Syntax of the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2016), 223.

v10 - Afterward, while Jesus was dining in the house, behold many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples.

Καὶ ἐγένετο is used by Matthew as "a structural turning point."[27] In my interpretation, I used the adverb "afterward" to signify a break and a turning point. While it may be a small irrelevant distinction, this better represents Matthew's writing style which develops the story. The dining of Jesus in Matthew's house represents the development of what it meant for Matthew to go up and follow him. The definite article used in τῇ οἰκίᾳ implies that this was a specific house. The gospel of Luke says that "Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house." (Lk 5:29) In the Greco-Roman world, dining had a deep meaning of bonding "that implied social and ethical obligations."[28] More is made of Jesus' actions to dine with the tax collectors and sinners but the story of Matthew who wanted the deep bond with Jesus to be back in fellowship with God needs to be remembered as well.

The author uses ἰδοὺ to emphasize the development of the story and is used in vv2-3 as well as v10.[29] Mathew's intention to draw more attention to the presence of tax collectors and sinners must be noted. While the tax collector was to the people during that time has been established in the context section of this chapter, the use of ἁμαρτωλοὶ needs to be clarified. Osborne mentions in his commentary the possibility that these could be the 'am ha'aretz, gamblers, pimps, thieves, or prostitutes[30]. What is not mentioned in

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[27] Carson, *Matthew*, 7:28-29.

[28] Mark A. Powell, "Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship," in *Table Fellowship*, ed. Joel B. Green, 2nd ed., The IVP Bible dictionary series (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2013), 2067.

[29] Osborne and Arnold, *Matthew*, 327.

[30] Osborne and Arnold, *Matthew*, 336.

the commentaries is the context of when ἁμαρτωλός is used. In the gospels, it is used in the Jewish context just as it is used in this text. In the epistles, only in Galatians 2:15 is it used as an attributive adjective ἐθνῶν Ἁμαρτωλοί. This is the only case ἁμαρτωλός is mentioned outside the context of Jews, the church, or believers. We often equate sinners as those who do not know God[31] but in most of the usage in scripture, it designates those who ought to know God but do not follow the actions befitting a covenant people. They are the people who do not follow the halakoth ("rules of conduct") which the Pharisees went out of their way to follow.[32] The reading of the text can differ quite a bit when recognizing that the point of Jesus' dining with the sinners and tax collectors was to bring back a people in the covenant relationship. These were not just the people whom the Pharisees thought were sinners, but Matthew explicitly defines them as sinners as well.

v11- Having seen (what was going on), the Pharisees said to his disciples "why does your teacher eat with the tax collectors and sinners?"

The author interjects another theme as he builds the progression up to the climax. Here, a group of separatists who follow the laws are introduced. The context in which the Pharisees apply to the text is mentioned in the context section. The Pharisees not only distanced themselves from the tax collectors and sinners who were eating at the table, but they also distanced themselves from Jesus and his disciples. The fellowship that was occurring as Jesus was dining with the tax collectors and sinners was clearly scandalous because of the intimacy that eating with someone would entail. In a time when Jews were

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[31] Qingping Liu, "On a Paradox of Christian Love," *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 35, no. 4 (2007): 689.

[32] Carson, *Matthew*, 9:10-11.

not able to sit at the same table with those who were unclean, the Pharisees, as guardians of being set apart, would have taken notice.[33] The Pharisees worded the question using διδάσκαλος ὑμῶν (your teacher) which reflects the separation between the Pharisees and Jesus' disciples.[34] This sets up a complex and nuanced interpretation of Jesus' response that comes next.

v12 - However, having heard (what they said), he said it is not those who are healthy that have a need for a physician but those who are sick.

On the surface level, the parallel seems very obvious: The Pharisees can be equated to the "healthy" and the tax collectors and sinners are those who are "sick." However, when viewed in light of the separatist tendencies of the Pharisees, the flow of the story suggests that the Pharisees are sick as well but refuse to seek out a physician. Thus, Jesus does not define the healthy status of the Pharisees, but it is self-defined much like someone who has a congenital disease but refuses to acknowledge it. Osborne mentions that Jesus is not saying the Pharisees are healthy but that "(Jesus has) not come for those who believe they are healthy but for those who know they are sick."[35]

The use of ἰσχύοντες instead of ὑγιαίνοντες to depict 'those who are healthy' as in Luke 5:31 may be intentional by the author to highlight a deeper meaning. Osborne mentions that οὐ χρείαν ἔχουσιν οἱ ἰσχύοντες ἰατροῦ ἀλλ᾽ οἱ κακῶς ἔχοντες is a common

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[33] Hagner and Metzger, *Matthew 1 - 13*, 238.

[34] Ulrich Luz and Helmut Koester, *Matthew 8-20 A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 2001), 33.

[35] Osborne and Arnold, *Matthew*, 336.

proverb that can also be found in Plutarch's Aopphthegmata laonica:[36] 'ὅτι οὐδ' οἱ ἰατροί' ἔφη 'παρὰ τοῖς ὑγιαίνουσιν, ὅπου δὲ οἱ νοσοῦντες, διατρίβειν εἰώθασιν.'[37] ('Because physicians, too, are wont to spend their time, not among the healthy, but where the sick are.')"[38] There are a few noticeable differences. ὑγιαίνω is used to depict the healthy like in Luke 5:31 (ἔχουσιν οἱ ὑγιαίνοντες) but νόσος is what Plutarch used while Matthew uses κακῶς. Both word choices have a larger semantic range. The gloss of ὑγιαίνω is "healthy" and "be correct"[39] and the gloss of νόσος is associated with being sick or ailing.[40] Matthew uses ἰσχύω which has a much larger gloss including "to have requisite personal resources to accomplish…" and "to be in control."[41] κακῶς can mean "to be bad in a moral sense."[42] While the interpretation cannot conclusively be 'it is not those who are in control that need a physician but those who are immoral,' there can be some wordplay and deeper meaning similar to how Jesus names Simon Πέτρος. It certainly lends itself well to the situation and the dichotomy between the Pharisees and the sinners. The Pharisees had the requisite resources and the biblical knowledge to keep the laws. They thought they held the power to control their righteousness through their deeds

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[36] Osborne and Arnold, *Matthew*, 336.

[37] "Plutarch, Apophthegmata Laconica, Stephpage 230f," https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0196%3Astephpage%3D230f.

[38] "Plutarch, Sayings of Spartans - 208B-236E," https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Moralia/Sayings_of_Spartans*/main.html.

[39] Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), sec. ὑγιαίνω.

[40] Danker and Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, s.v. "νόσος."

[41] Danker and Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, s.v. "ἰσχύω."

[42] Danker and Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, s.v. "κακῶς."

without the need for Christ or intervention. It is those who recognize that they are powerless and immoral that seek Christ, the great physician.

v13- but go and experience what this is "Mercy I desire, not sacrifice." For I did not come to call the righteous but sinners.

We are met with an even greater climax as Jesus tells the Pharisees πορευθέντες δὲ μάθετε. Although it follows the rabbinic formula to "go and learn,"[43] this is remarkably similar matter to when Jesus commissions his disciples and commands πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε (Mt 28:19). Both share the same root.[44] To merely view this as a cerebral exercise would fall short of the true meaning. Just as discipling someone is more than transferring knowledge, Jesus intends the Pharisees to go beyond merely gaining knowledge of Hosea 6:6. In instances where μανθάνω is used, such as Paul's letter to Timothy, it is obvious that whatever learning is more than in the mind. Paul exhorts Timothy to "abide in what you have learned (Σὺ δὲ μένε ἐν οἷς ἔμαθες)." (2 Tm 3:14) For Paul to ask Timothy to abide, was to ask Timothy to embody what he had learned as a disciple.[45] Matthew, whom Jesus was dining with had decided to follow Christ as his disciple to embody the teachings of Jesus. This sounds more like an invitation to the Pharisees to open their eyes than it is a condemnation for their apprehension towards eating with the sinners.

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[43] Carson, *Matthew*, 9:12-13.

[44] Hagner and Metzger, *Matthew 1 - 13*, 238.

[45] Danker and Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, s.v. "μανθάνω."

The author sets up Jesus' response as a culmination of covenant, *hesed*, and discipleship by quoting Hosea 6:6. The Hebrew word for Ἔλεος is חֶסֶד which can be interpreted as "covenant love" although many other glosses are applicable due to the vast semantic range of this Hebrew word as it has developed even within the OT context.[46] The verse itself is a rejection of the façade of religious duty through rituals but to have *hesed* toward God by "knowing him."[47] To know God is not to follow the rituals but to think of his covenant love. This does not mean that following rituals can be eschewed altogether but that mercy is of more importance. Carson mentions the Hebrew figure of speech: ""not A but B" often means "B is of more basic importance than A.""[48] Matthew draws a parallel between the Pharisees and the people in the time of Hosea. The Pharisees believe that their ritual purity is more important than the heart of mercy or God's covenant love.

The same approach to the Hebrew figure of speech can be applied to calling the sinners and not the righteous. It is not that the righteous - or those who think they are righteous – are not called to be saved but the idea of acknowledging sinfulness is of more importance. As implied by the story of the paralytic, Jesus' ministry is that of forgiveness.[49] Those who seek Jesus address him with Ἐλέησον (have mercy) in the narrative of Jesus' ministries by Matthew.[50] Jesus emphasizes the need to realize that mercy is needed more than righteous acts. It is not that the law is unimportant as Jesus

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[46] Card, *Inexpressible*, 9–10.

[47] Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*, 110.

[48] Carson, *Matthew*, 9:12-13.

[49] Osborne and Arnold, *Matthew*, 337.

[50] Luz and Koester, *Matthew 8-20 A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 34.

did not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it (Mt 5:17). It is to realize that Jesus is giving the "hermeneutical key to understanding the law."[51] Those who think they are righteous through acts and their separatist tendencies from sinners are not actually righteous because they fail to truly understand the law.

Summary

Instead of a balanced view that requires both orthodoxy and orthopraxy, doxy is twisted to fit orthopraxy, or orthodoxy is so emphasized that orthopraxy is often out of the picture. Matthew 9:9-13 is often used as a polemic against the self-righteous separatists and is mistakenly used as evidence that Jesus taught tolerism. Both extremes miss the point. The development of the story is about what it means to have a covenant relationship through discipleship and *hesed*. The dichotomy is not about self-righteousness and sinners, but it is about those with a heart ready for Jesus' call. The issues that plague the churches come from the misaligned definition of love. There are those who a very disciplined in their faith but are separatists while others say it is all about love without any fruit in discipleship. This passage serves as a foundation for those who are legalistic to find mercy and those who are antinomian to find the beauty of living out a life of discipline that starts with a covenant relationship.

Relationship Based on Covenant

The story in its very fundamental principle is based on the God's wanting to have a relationship with us by calling us into his covenant. It is not by coincidence that

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[51] Richard B. Hays, "Whose World, Which Law?," *Journal of Law and Religion* 32, no. 1 (2017): 22.

Matthew's calling and the disapproving Pharisees in Matthew 9:9-13 mirrors the song in Hosea 6:1-6. The biblical narrative has always been about the covenant relationship between humanity and God. The key to keeping that covenant is not about what we do to keep the covenant but to understand God's mercy that is offered to us so that we may be healed. It also highlights the order of things in the covenant relationship. The Pharisees were wrong because they put righteous actions first instead of a heart of *hesed* toward God and neighbor. In doing so they were excluded from the new covenant ushered in through Christ. Their discipline was in vain.

The understanding of the text is dependent on how we think this may apply to our modern day. While there are principles that apply to those who have not heard the gospel, the characters in the story are all people who would have been aware of the covenant with God as Jewish people. The rabbinic language that he uses in this narrative seems to suggest that Matthew has a familiarity with Jewish customs that are based on the Mishnah and Torah. It is also fair to presume that Matthew did not continue as a tax collector when we got up to follow Jesus. It meant that he left everything behind, including the things that would have compromised his ritual purity as well. That is, there was a leaving behind of his sinful past. The narrative suggests that he was able to enter into a covenant relationship set by Christ because he realized his sin and his spiritual illness. For the antinomian, they must understand consistent actions consistent with the teachings of Christ must be taken when in a covenant relationship.

The same principle applies to the Pharisees. They fail in their covenant relationship because they fail to realize their sin and spiritual illness. The reluctance of the legalists to admit their sinfulness is something that can be addressed through this

passage. The pitfalls of closing the door for others and the impact such actions have on spiritual health are also part of the teaching that can come from this text.

Hesed

The heart of the story is *hesed*. It is the loving kindness shown by Christ to call the sinners and to enter a deep relationship with them. It is not that the Pharisees lacked love. They loved their identity as a covenant people and fought hard to keep their Jewish roots amid the pervasive Hellenism movement. They loved their country and their identity and thought they did so in a very biblical way. It is a virtue by modern American standards as well, but this is precisely what kept them from seeing Jesus. Their love was not defined by *hesed*. In a sense, one can argue that the Pharisees loved the law more than God, for if they loved God, they would have loved with mercy instead of rebuke and judgment. The legalist must always be reminded that love which embodies mercy must come first.

From Matthew's standpoint, he followed Christ and left everything behind because he was able to see God's *hesed* through Christ. As he saw Jesus and his disciples share life with his guests who were tax collectors and sinners, he witnessed *hesed* firsthand. Matthew fell short of every metric of worldly love. He was a traitor to his country, to his people, and his God. Yet, he was shown mercy to witness the kingdom of God, redemption from the Son of David and Abraham (Mt 1:1), and God the Son. It was not the acceptance of sin that changed Matthew, it was the experiencing of God's mercy toward sin that changed him. To those who do not show any noticeable change in their life like Matthew did must reckon with the fact that they might not have faith by virtue of

not experiencing God's mercy through Christ considering the faith that Jesus' disciples showed in the midst of their sinfulness.

Discipleship

The culmination of covenant and *hesed* is lived out through discipleship. The language used suggests an undertone of discipleship through and through. Jesus calls Matthew to follow him and he follows. Jesus develops a strong relationship with Matthew as he dines in Matthew's house. Jesus' commands to the Pharisees mimic the Great Commission to his disciples. The way that the church can get parishioners to align with God's love is by encouraging people to live it out for the sake of understanding just as Jesus asks Matthew to follow him and just as he asks the Pharisees to go and learn what *hesed* means.

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

The deep impact of the Moravians on John Wesley is well-known among the Methodists. Due to the confusing moniker given to this movement, it must be clarified that the Moravians in this chapter do not represent an ethnic group. The Moravian movement was started by a Lutheran Pietist by the name of Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf und Pottendorf (1700-160). Those part of the Moravian movement were called the Unitas Fratrum (Unity of Brethren) and started when the Renewed Brethren established itself in the town of Herrnhut after a group of refugees from Moravia and Bohemia settled in Count Zinzendorf's estate.[1] How a group of Pietists and refugees from what is now the Czech Republic under the leadership of a German count ended up in America and became a part of God's plan for spiritual renewal in the United States is a story to behold.

The Moravians were a group of believers that lived out their faith as a response to the outpouring of the Spirit. Many pastors and laity alike wish for a revival like the one which ignited the Moravian movement. Especially in light of the recent Asbury Outpouring which took place on February 8, 2023. This chapter will give a case study on

[1] Philip Schaff, *American Church History* (New York, NY: Christian Literature, 1893), 272.

the Moravian movement and how the understanding of God's mercy(*hesed*) and discipline led to one of the most well-known revivals and missional movement.

The movement can be summed up as a reaction to God's *hesed* leading to discipline and resulting in true Christian discipleship. This chapter will deal with the historical movement that was shaped by a focus on God's love and the resulting discipline of receiving such love. It will also give the reasoning as to why a similar event may have failed to happen in the modern-day Moravian church. The rest of the chapter will discuss the prevalent disciplines that sustained this movement.

A Change in Perspective

The emphasis on love of God and discipline was part of a larger shift as the some in the German Lutheran church sought to reform it. The perspective shift leading to the fertile seedbed for the Moravian movement was put in place before the Moravians moved to Zinzendorf's estate. Zinzendorf was highly influenced by his godfather, Philip Jakob Spener and his teacher, August Hermann Francke.[2] Spener led the *Collegia pietatis* (assemblies of piety) and led the Pietist movement with Francke.[3] In some circles of Lutheran orthodoxy, theologians attributed a heavy education based faith as the reason why the church had failed to bring forth a significant change in lifestyle and piety among its members. This heavy cognitive-centric approach to faith was met with the Pietist movement. Shantz writes, "More important theologically are reflections concerning the proper manner in which faith and piety should be taught in public worship, which was

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[2] Alice T. Ott, *Turning Points in the Expansion of Christianity : From Pentecost to the Present* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2021), 100.

[3] Douglas H. Shantz, *A Companion to German Pietism, 1660-1800* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2015), 17.

dominated by preaching and the sacraments, as well as how it should be nurtured in the private sphere through meditation, house visits, pastoral care, and devotional literature ."[4] A noticeable shift had occurred and this had become the antecedent of the Moravian movement. Faith no longer became a mere intellectual exercise, but a renewed emphasis was put in experiencing faith through spiritual disciplines. Faith was not about knowing but about doing. It is in this environment where Zinzendorf was able to welcome in a group of Moravian exiles to make the Herrnhut community which became what some call "the most influential city of refuge."[5]

One may wonder how such a model community based on revival and mission did not become a more prevalent denomination. The Moravian movement saw themselves settle in the colonial era of the United States, yet they are not considered a "mainline denomination." Despite their long history in the United States and noticeable contribution to other spiritual movements like those that were led by John Wesley, they are a relatively obscure denomination. The heavy emphasis on discipline, which was a hallmark of Zinzendorf's community, ironically waned down as the Moravian movement moved to the United States. The Moravian movement gained momentum like the Methodist Church in the 19th century US because of its sectarian tendency. It refused to conform to the prevalent models of the church until its decline when the doctrines that set it apart were softened in the process called sect transformation.[6] Not all sectarian tendencies are good but movements like the Methodists and Moravians show a true

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[4] Shantz, *A Companion to German Pietism, 1660-1800*, 19.

[5] Michael J. Lewis, *City of Refuge : Separatists and Utopian Town Planning* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016), 95.

[6] Finke and Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776 - 2005*, loc. 1951.

kingdom impact when there is a sense of set-apartness stemming from the work of the Spirit that leads to a life of discipline.

The name "Moravians" is an interesting term to describe this movement. While due to the name, many assume that this movement was a movement of an ethnic group that was displaced. It is true that the early Moravian community of Herrnhut was started when Moravian refugees had settled, the community was diverse ethnically as well as theologically. Germans who were drawn to the Pietist movement were welcomed into the community. It included people from Lutheran, Reformed, or Catholic backgrounds. The link to the Moravians was originally a means that Zinzendorf used to break free from the Lutheran church. [7] In Germany at the time, the community's name was *die Brüdergemeine*. Zinzendorf, after a group of refugees from Moravia and Bohemia settled in his estate, revived the name of the Hussite movement, and called it the Unitas Fratrum (Unity of the Brethren).[8] The history of how the name of the denomination had taken place highlights a significant sectarian tendency. What the Moravians wanted to be separate from highlights the emphasis on discipline and the workings of the Spirit compared to their contemporaries at that time.

The sectarian tendency that was implemented by Zinzendorf was that based on love of God and discipline. However, Atwood mentions that in the history of the church on the American Moravian website, Zinzendorf is not mentioned as the founder of the

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[7] Peter Vogt, "How Moravian Are the Moravians? The Paradox of Moravian Identity," *Journal of Moravian History* 18, no. 1 (2018): 85.

[8] Lewis, *City of Refuge : Separatists and Utopian Town Planning*, 96, 101.

church but as someone who led a spiritual renewal rather than the founder.[9] Atwood mentions about August Gottlieb Spangenberg, widely considered as the Moravian leader after Zinzendorf's death, that his seminal writing *Idea* "was written to reassure the public…that the Moravians were an orthodox Protestant church rather than a radical Zinzendorfian sect."[10] This response may have had to do more with Spangenberg's response to the increasing polemic against the Moravian movement by not just Lutherans but the Reformed Church.[11] However, a radical sect transformation happened in one generation instead of the gradual transformation seen in other mainline denominations.

Prevalent Disciplines

What set apart the Moravian movement was the disciplined nature of how they lived out their faith. Spiritual disciplines followed a remarkable pattern of God centered discipline. Disciplines were not a means to an end but a reaction to God's grace. The discipleship practiced by the Moravians was not legalistic in nature but was based on a response to the experience of God. The Moravian movement became a case study on how discipline based on God's love can lead to deeper discipleship and bear fruit. The next section will deal with the spiritual disciplines of 1) prayer, 2) fellowship, 3) singing, 4) witness, and 5) finances that were practiced with remarkable consistency, leading to a deeper discipleship and Christlikeness. Zinzendorf required these things of the members

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[9] Craig Atwood, "The Use of the 'Ancient Unity' in the Historiography of the Moravian Church," *Journal of Moravian History* 13, no. 2 (2013): 111.

[10] Craig D. Atwood, "Apologizing for the Moravians: Spangenberg's "Idea Fidei Fratrum," *Journal of Moravian History*, no. 8 (2010): 55.

[11] Frank Marquardt, "'Distinguishing Ourselves From the Other Religions': Confessional Conflicts and Their Influence on the Early Moravian Danish West Indies Mission," *Journal of Moravian History* 19, no. 2 (2019): 138.

of the early Moravian settlement and his *Brotherly Agreement of Herrnhut*, he makes clear the element of *hesed* and discipline that lead to relationship with God through Christian discipleship. Statute 3 clearly defines "the characteristics of a member of the body of Christ." The characteristic starts with the very definition of *hesed,* and the members are defined by those who have received "God's mere mercy in Christ." It does not end with grace but a living out of grace as the discipline that is a natural outpouring of *hesed*. Of grace, Zinzendorf mentions that members would be "unable to live without it for a single moment" and the need to "show a daily need for his sin to be taken away and to become holier every day."[12] The Herrnhut community was predicated on an understanding of *hesed* and discipline.

Prayer

The role of prayer and fasting was critical in the establishment of the Moravian church. In his *1727 Statutes of Herrnhut*, Zinzendorf wrote:

> 4. As long as it does not become a routine, it is good that certain days are spent by the congregation with fasting and prayer or thanksgiving and glorification of the Lord to commemorate God's faithfulness, especially May 12, the day the first brethren went out and on which day many things have happened in various years. May everyone, together with his close brethren, dedicate to the Lord any days that are especially remarkable to him.[13]

This set the tone for the revival in the Moravian church. The role of prayer in the Moravian church, as intentional as it was, was an organic response to the movement of the Holy Spirit. This is quite different from the way that prayer can be viewed in the modern church. Many view prayer as a discipline for Christian formation rather than a

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[12] Paul Peucker, "The 1727 Statutes of Herrnhut," *Journal of Moravian History* 20, no. 1 (2020): 107.

[13] Peucker, "The 1727 Statutes of Herrnhut," 108.

response to the workings of God. That is, prayer is viewed more as a means rather than a response. Zinzendorf highlights why prayer must not become a routine.

The prayer life during the establishment and missions of the Moravian church closely resembles the Benedictine Rules and the life that Benedict lived as well. There was a pattern of repentance, full obedience to God, and responding with life of prayer. Benedict renounced his walk of life in the secular world of Rome and decided to live a disciplined life of full obedience to God.[14] Rules 3 and 4 of Benedict's Prologue are a mirror image of how Zinzendorf established the order of the brethren. St. Benedict, Abbot of Monte Cassino writes to "renounce self-will and take up…obedience" and to "beg [God] with most insistent prayer to bring it to completion."[15] Spangenberg, in his biography of Zinzendorf, mentions the renunciation of self-centeredness that came because of religious quarrels among believers. A direct result of the moving of the Holy Spirit was the establishment of a prayer night-watch who would pray over the community the whole night.[16] The night-watch too is similar to Benedict's rule to have Night Office Vigils.[17] The Moravians also started disciplined prayer movements like the "hourly prayer" that started from one midnight to the next to be done in secret. The number of those who prayed unceasingly increased from twenty-four to seventy-seven. [18] Again, the

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[14] David Robinson, *Ancient Paths: Discover Christian Formation the Benedictine Way* (Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2010), 5.

[15] Terrence Kardong and Benedict, *Benedict's Rule: A Translation and Commentary* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2021), 3.

[16] August Gottlieb Spangenberg and Peter La Trobe, *The Life of Nicholas Lewis Count Zinsendorf.* (London, United Kingdom: S. Holdsworth, 1838), 85.

[17] Kardong and Benedict, *Benedict's Rule: A Translation and Commentary*, 169.

[18] Spangenberg and La Trobe, *The Life of Nicholas Lewis Count Zinsendorf.*, 88.

constant need for prayer mimics the Benedictine rule of praying seven times a day[19] as well as the nightly prayer. The disciplined prayer that started in the Moravian church was not praying for the sake of praying but a response to the working of the Holy Spirit and the witness of God's work in their community.

What made Moravian prayer culture so successful was not just the content of the prayer but the implementation of those prayers into action. The content of prayer parallels the life that the Moravians lived. During the hourly prayer, the Moravians would intercede "for all the churches of the Brethren and their choirs; for individuals, for the missionaries, the land in which they dwelt, the magistrates and teachers, the Whole of Christendom, and the human race in general." [20] The strong communal aspect of prayer was shown in the immigration strategy of the Moravian movement to America. Moravians moved in groups by ships owned and operated by the church. The strong communal ties based on faith led to a much more successful establishment with thirty-eight times less mortality than other German-speaking immigrants.[21]

Prayer was at the forefront of every movement and decision of the Moravians. When the institution's rules were established in the summer of 1727, so was the hourly prayer. This interceding prayer movement would continue for over one hundred years.[22] When an elder of the church passed away, the process was similar to that seen when Mathias was chosen as the apostle to replace Judas (Acts 1). The leaders prayed and

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[19] Kardong and Benedict, *Benedict's Rule: A Translation and Commentary*, 191–192.

[20] Spangenberg and La Trobe, *The Life of Nicholas Lewis Count Zinsendorf.*, 88.

[21] Aaron S. Fogleman, "Moravian Immigration and Settlement in British North America, 1734-1775," *Transactions of the Moravian Historical Society* 29 (1996): 30.

[22] A. J. Lewis, *Zinzendorf, the Ecumenical Pioneer: A Study in the Moravian Contribution to Christian Mission and Unity* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1962), 60.

decided on the predecessor by casting lots.[23] The missional movement that was a unique trait of the Moravians was a result of prayer. There were many more memorable days of prayer similar to the aftershocks of an earthquake, there were aftershocks of a great revival that had taken place in 1727. The missional mindset was established when Zinzendorf and leaders of the church got together to see "how they might venture upon some worthy undertaking for God.[24]

The reason the prayer life of the Moravians was so successful was the deeply ingrained nature of prayer. Zinzendorf made it easier for the hourly prayer to be sustained by allowing those who participated to pray at the time most convenient for the prayer.[25] While some may say this would be a lack of discipline, the discipline of praying in a "convenient" time meant that a time of rest was spent praying for the church and its mission. Even in the most challenging times, prayers did not cease. The experience that John Wesley had on his voyage to America with the Moravians was not unique. John Wesley confessed his unwillingness and fear of dying writing "How is it that thou hast no faith? being still unwilling to die." The tone shifts after the prayers with the Moravians with the idea of submitting to God, as Wesley writes "And now a storm did not appear so terrible as before."[26] Wesley writes of witnessing the difference between the English and the Moravians on board as he heard terrible screams from the English but calm singing.[27]

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[23] Spangenberg and La Trobe, *The Life of Nicholas Lewis Count Zinsendorf.*, 172.

[24] J. Taylor Hamilton, *A History of the Missions of the Moravian Church During the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Bethlehem, PA: Times, 1901), 2–3.

[25] Spangenberg and La Trobe, *The Life of Nicholas Lewis Count Zinsendorf.*, 88.

[26] John Wesley, "Journal and Diaries I (1735–38)," in *The Works of John Wesley*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 142.

[27] Wesley, "Journal and Diaries I (1735–38)," 143.

A journal entry from a Moravian aboard the Irene in 1757 shows even more dire circumstances but an incredible reliance on disciplined prayer. The Irene was captured by French Pirates and even when stripped of everything, the records show that the Moravians "did not fail to meet in the evenings for singing, and on Saturday for praying the Litany."[28]

This is different from a lot of the reactionary prayers that we see and experience. The prayers that the Moravians had were ones that arose from a disciplined life of prayer as a reaction to experiencing the Holy Spirit rather than a reaction against adversity. This way of prayer continued even to the 18th and 19th centuries. In the mission field, the Native Americans martyred Moravian missionaries, and they died by way of slow burning described as being roasted alive. The journal entries show that they endured the torture through prayer. [29] It would be an understatement to say that prayer played a critical role in the movement of the Moravian church. Prayer was the backbone of the movement, and it is the reason for the resiliency of a movement that started in the property of a count that led to a prolific immigration success story, impacting many spiritual leaders along the way.

Singing

How discipline leads to a revival is not mentioned as much in the historical records of revival. We forget that the Day of Pentecost was predicated by the disciplined prayer of the disciples (Acts 1). There were disciplines in place before the revival that is

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[28] John W. Jordan, "Moravian Immigration to Pennsylvania, 1734-1767," *Transactions of the Moravian Historical Society* 5, no. 2 (1896): 83.

[29] Hamilton, *A History of the Missions of the Moravian Church During the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, 79.

now known as the "Golden Summer of 1727." This has been part of the Moravian identity. The same year as the Azusa Street revival, a Moravian pastor, John Greenfield argued the Pentecostal origins of the Moravian church by referencing "the communion service at the little Lutheran church in Berthelsdorf on August 13, 1727."[30] An integral part of the revival was that it started with a gathering known as the Sungstunde or singing meeting. This naturally flowed into Zinzendorf's leading of the repentance of those who were present.[31] The singing led to prayer because it was part of the rules that Zinzendorf had set within the community. In his *Manorial Commandments*, Zinzendorf required members to sing a verse from a hymn during the night watch.[32] The revivals and meetings were often a combination of prayer and song, and this pattern showed throughout the early history of the Moravian church. This consistent spiritual discipline is what led to an environment where people would be ready for an outpouring of the Spirit.

The singing, as it was in prayer, was not a means to an end but a response to God's *hesed*. The same pattern of the heart emerged even in singing. In Christian Gregor's 1784 "Treatise Concerning the Singing in the Brethren Congregation," it is clear that the Moravians were encouraged to sing as a response to what the Spirit had done. The basis of singing in the Moravian church was biblical in nature but it is how the bible was reflected that is of interest. The treatise gives an example by using the biblical story of how those in the Old Testament sang praise after they had experienced

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[30] Jared S. Burkholder, "'As on the Day of Pentecost': Revivalism, John Greenfield, and the Memory of August 13, 1727," *Journal of Moravian History* 19, no. 2 (2019): 183.

[31] Lewis, *Zinzendorf, the Ecumenical Pioneer: A Study in the Moravian Contribution to Christian Mission and Unity*, 53.

[32] Peucker, "The 1727 Statutes of Herrnhut," 112.

deliverance from the hands of their enemies.[33] The New Testament singing was a result of the experiencing fulfillment.[34] The singing was reactionary in nature. It was not performative. Discipline was an outpouring of the experience of God's love.

Although there is mention of public singing, singing itself was never a means to glorify the person singing or to entertain. The sole purpose of singing is to glorify God. The treatise states "that all who perform … be always present in the right state, that is, with the hearts inclined to adore God."[35] There are explicit rules for organists and those singing in the choir to never stick out.[36] The spiritual discipline of singing was not used a vehicle of self-gratification but a carefully thought out method of a reciprocal relationship with God. It should come as no surprise that when the first Moravian missionaries were sent out to St. Thomas Island, the whole congregation gathered to sing a hundred hymns to encourage the missionaries.[37]

Fellowship

Fellowship was imbedded in the Moravian's living out or discipleship. The experience of *hesed* was not enjoyed at just an individual level but as a whole. The revival had also led to one of the Moravian church's well-known traditions: the love feast.

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[33] Peter Vogt, "Christian Gregor's 'Treatise Concerning the Singing in the Brethren Congregation' (1784): A Bilingual Edition," *Journal of Moravian History* 21, no. 2 (2021): 194.

[34] Vogt, "Christian Gregor's 'Treatise Concerning the Singing in the Brethren Congregation' (1784): A Bilingual Edition," 195.

[35] Vogt, "Christian Gregor's 'Treatise Concerning the Singing in the Brethren Congregation' (1784): A Bilingual Edition," 207.

[36] Vogt, "Christian Gregor's 'Treatise Concerning the Singing in the Brethren Congregation' (1784): A Bilingual Edition," 208.

[37] Lewis, *Zinzendorf, the Ecumenical Pioneer: A Study in the Moravian Contribution to Christian Mission and Unity*, 79.

Right after the revival Zinzendorf sent each of the people who had been talking about the revival, they experienced having food and drink unbothered.[38] This event became the blueprint for the love feast that the Moravian church celebrates today.

The fellowship of the members was not only the enjoyment of God's mercy but also a part of discipline itself. This shows an important aspect of discipleship. It is not meant to be a journey taken alone. Even though discipline is at the discretion of the individual, the corporate aspect of discipline in discipleship makes it a much more fruitful enterprise. The uniqueness of the Moravian church is how the revival led to missions and a community that shared life and faith in a much closer manner than other denominations. While small group meetings were nothing new and were implemented by Spener[39] The bands that were formed in the Moravian church were different. While the small groups in Spener's movement focused on devotional topics[40], these bands met together regularly and, in an effort to wholly commit to God, kept nothing from each other.[41] There was a strict safeguard against dissent among the group members as there was a statute explicitly mentioning the importance of confidentially enforced on not just the one who may potentially tell confidential matter but to the one who may listen to it as well.[42] It is in

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[38] Lewis, *Zinzendorf, the Ecumenical Pioneer: A Study in the Moravian Contribution to Christian Mission and Unity*, 60.

[39] Thomas S. Kidd, *The Great Awakening : The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 25.

[40] Kidd, *The Great Awakening : The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America*, 26.

[41] Spangenberg and La Trobe, *The Life of Nicholas Lewis Count Zinsendorf.*, 87.

[42] Peucker, "The 1727 Statutes of Herrnhut," 111.

these meetings that became the impetus for community growth and essential to the Moravian community.[43]

There are multiple statutes in the *Brotherly Agreement of Herrnhut* related to fellowship with one another. Some of the discipline was voluntary in nature. Although a revival was called for daily, Zinzendorf prohibited anyone from forcing one to attend unless it was a congregational matter.[44] Yet, there was an elevated level of accountability within the group. "Friendly discipline" was part of the requirements of staying within the community and those who would not cede to it either had to leave the town or excluded until there was "ample proof of his true change.[45] One would not be able to live a disciplined life privately in this community.

The theme that arose from relationships is the discipline required to keep the relationships. The relationships in the Moravian community were not based on affinity of one another but based on experience the grace of God together through discipline in relationships. In Zinzendorf's "Seventeen Points of Matrimony" he does not end with the biblical definition of what marriage is and is not, but he continues to emphasize the importance of continuous relationship building. Point 9 states:

> Marriage according to the Intention of our Saviour is a fellowship and continual conversation of a man and a woman, join'd together by the Lord to bear/draw equally all Burdens of a double labour, and to perform all things, which are required of a compleat Body, but can not be done by a single person.[46]

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[43] Ian Randall, "Early Moravian Spirituality and Missionary Vision," *Wesley and Methodist Studies* 9, no. 2 (2017): 127, https://dx.doi.org/10.5325/weslmethstud.9.2.0123.

[44] Peucker, "The 1727 Statutes of Herrnhut," 110.

[45] Peucker, "The 1727 Statutes of Herrnhut," 112–113.

[46] Peter Vogt, "Zinzendorf's 'Seventeen Points of Matrimony': A Fundamental Document on the Moravian Understanding of Marriage and Sexuality," *Journal of Moravian History*, no. 10 (2011): 47.

There is emphasis on continuity and commitment in marriage in line with the other aspects and requirements of communal living.

Witness

One of the key contributions of the Moravian church is that God allowed the church to be a witness to the power of the Holy Spirit. However, this was not possible without discipline. The movement was truly a manifestation of Romans 5:3-5:

> And not only that, but we also boast in our afflictions, knowing that affliction produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

The Moravian movement was a series of afflictions. Herrnhut itself was a city of refugees who were displaced from their native lands. Within 10 years of settling in Germany the Moravians were forced to move again. Amid tension between clergy who were displeased with the revival taking place in Herrnhut due to the increasing conversion of Wends, an edict was signed against Schwenkfeld refugees to be banished from the lands that Zinzendorf offered for the oppressed people. He mediated the emigration of this group to Georgia.[47] In the two-year process of preparing for the move, the people made provisions to go to Pennsylvania in case of similar banishment. Arriving in Savana on April 17, 1734,[48] the Moravians established themselves first in the United States in Georgia and left five years later to establish Bethlehem Pennsylvania.[49] Coupled with

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[47] Spangenberg and La Trobe, *The Life of Nicholas Lewis Count Zinsendorf.*, 173.

[48] Hamilton, *A History of the Missions of the Moravian Church During the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, 78–79.

[49] Schaff, *American Church History*, 273.

languishing conditions and the eve of a Spanish invasion of Georgia from Florida, the rest of the settlers decided to move to Pennsylvania.[50]

Even in the midst of all these affliction, the Moravians produced character because of their disciplined life. Within a brief period of reaching American shores, they had also established a school for Indian children close by and missions to the slaves in South Carolina were started.[51] The fruit of discipleship through perseverance should not come as a surprise.

The biggest, but sadly the least known, fruit of discipleship in the Moravian church is the emphasis on Christian unity and equality. Lewis mentions that "no Protestant Church had ever directed her efforts to so many different races."[52] The boarding records of ships contain names of Blacks who were part of the community. On the records of the Cahterine, "Andrew, a negro" is mentioned under the heading of Single Brethren.[53] While it may be odd to modern audiences that race and ethnicity were singled out in the records, the name is mentioned with the rest of the members who boarded the ship. Instead of becoming separatists based on their identity, the Moravians pulled many elements from other believers. The Moravians were able to become missional minded once they adopted the values of the Pietists and combined their emphasis on ethics with

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[50] Hamilton, *A History of the Missions of the Moravian Church During the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, 81.

[51] Hamilton, *A History of the Missions of the Moravian Church During the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, 79–80.

[52] Lewis, *Zinzendorf, the Ecumenical Pioneer: A Study in the Moravian Contribution to Christian Mission and Unity*.

[53] Jordan, "Moravian Immigration to Pennsylvania, 1734-1767," 55.

more evangelical values.[54] The Moravians had always shown a willingness to work with other believers who shared their zeal for Christ. The impact that the Moravians had on John Wesley is well-known as Spangenberg, the successor of Zinzendorf, challenges the Wesleys on the concept of personal salvation. The Moravians worked with Whitefield to build a mission school for Native Americans.[55] Perhaps Zinzendorf's chagrin towards people moving from one denomination to another because of preference puts it best. He could not understand the movement of protestants who believed in the authority of scripture.[56]

Finances

Count Zinzendorf lived out his faith through his finances. He was a wealthy individual as a Saxon nobleman.[57] However, influenced by the Holy Spirit, he used his wealth for God and his mission. He purchased the estate of Berthelsdorf from his grandmother with the intent of starting a model community and built a house for the first Moravian refugees. The establishment was named Herrnhut (Watched of the Lord).[58] How Zinzendorf understood finances and the effect it had on finances is shown through the rules of the community.

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[54] J. E. Hutton 1868-1937., *A History of Moravian Missions* (London, United Kingdom: Moravian Publication Office, 1922), 11.

[55] Hamilton, *A History of the Missions of the Moravian Church During the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, 80, 82.

[56] Lewis, *Zinzendorf, the Ecumenical Pioneer: A Study in the Moravian Contribution to Christian Mission and Unity*.

[57] Lewis, *City of Refuge : Separatists and Utopian Town Planning*, 99.

[58] Lewis, *City of Refuge : Separatists and Utopian Town Planning*, 101.

The community rules instilled by Zinzendorf, covered a great deal of financial disciplines, a spiritual discipline often overlooked by the modern-day church. Part of having a community was the discipline of contribution. Although the majority of the group were refugees, they were expected to contribute financially through taxes once housing and jobs were established with provision for providing finances for those who did not have the means.[59] Everyone was expected to contribute and be able to maintain their household. Financial discipline is often overlooked. However, Zinzendorf was well aware of the relationship dynamics between neighbor when money was involved. Hence, rules and expectations of finances were explicit.

Many could assume that Herrnhut would be a utopian society where everyone was equal financially. However, the statutes show that there was wealth disparity. Regarding creditors, Zinzendorf sated "No creditor shall attach [property of] a widow or orphan during the first four weeks, unless they are notoriously wealthy."[60] There are records of benevolent members of the cause. The owner of the ship Catherine sold his ship with the proceeds "to be deposited in the Society to be instituted in Pennsylvania for the Furtherance of the Gospel, there to lay till that Society be formed, and then to buy a vessel fit for the intended use and wholly to be employed in that service"[61] This is an example of living out an important facet of finances as a spiritual discipline. It is not the amount of money that is the blessing but how the money is spent. The fruit of finance as spiritual discipline was shown throughout how wealthy members contributed to the mission to North America.

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[59] Peucker, "The 1727 Statutes of Herrnhut," 93.

[60] Peucker, "The 1727 Statutes of Herrnhut," 97.

[61] Jordan, "Moravian Immigration to Pennsylvania, 1734-1767," 56.

Another aspect of discipline was the safeguards against unhealthy financial practices. Information regarding personal finances was shared to a certain extent. The expectation of loans was that it would be paid back in a certain hour, if not the reason would have to be disclosed and credit limits were set. Lending and borrowing also needed consent and a good reason would have to be given.[62] Unlike many modern churches where finances are kept secret, the statutes that required transparency of finances in the believer's community led to an environment of discipline.

Conclusion

Many yearn for the excitement of activity that the Moravians experienced during their formative years. Some try to distill the movement down to elements and try to replicate the things that the Moravians did. While the work of the Holy Spirit is not something a mere human can discern, it leaves us wondering why there is a lack of movement despite the presence of prayer in our lives. Why has there not been an outpouring like this despite the advancements in music within the church? Members of churches and denominations feel a great deal of pride by being a part of a movement. Many churches have budgets to support global missions, and the United States is in a period of unprecedented wealth. Most, if not all the elements that the Moravians had are present in the modern-day church, yet the church is declining within the United States.

The case study of the Moravian movement shows the importance of the right starting point. The rules and statutes instituted by Zinzendorf could easily have been a way for legalism to take root. The *1717 Statutes of Herrnhut* could have easily served as

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[62] Peucker, "The 1727 Statutes of Herrnhut," 95–96.

a manual of things to do leading to legalism. However, the response centric and voluntary elements in the writing of the language suggests that all things were predicated on having an experience of God's grace. It was a covenant community that did not start with a promise to teach other but with a promise with God. The 'why' of discipleship cannot be ignored. The elements of discipline were effective because the movement started with an experience of God's *hesed*. Like the tax collectors and sinners Jesus reclined with in the Matthew 9:9-13, they realized that they were sick and in need of a healer. They desired steadfast love (*hesed*) and not sacrifice (Hos 6:6). It was not prayer, singing, fellowship, witness, and finances that led to the fruit of discipleship, it was that the Moravians responded to God's *hesed* with these things.

This movement would not have been a significant and enduring movement had it not been for the disciplined nature of it. While the relative obscurity of the Moravian church was mentioned, the denomination has still persevered and played an integral part in establishing faith in the United States. If anything, the decline had more to do with the laxing of discipline among the Moravians. The Moravians flourished during a tumultuous time. This gives perspective of what human flourishing from faithful discipline can look like. It was not only that the Moravians were much more resilient than their counterparts in America but that they added so much to the flourishing of others. The accounts of missions to Native Americans and slaves, as well as the willingness of the Moravians to move into communities based on the need of the collective over the individual, show the manifestation of the spiritual disciplines at work. This resiliency and kingdom impact was possible because of the discipline that was present. The Moravians show with proper understanding of discipline which comes from the receiving of God's love, the church

can battle the legalistic or antinomian tendencies it is facing today. The openness of the Moravians that came from a very rigid social structure and discipline shows a possible alternate way of thinking about what it means to accept those who are sinners but to hold oneself to the high standard that Christ has set for us.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

The theology of sanctification best reflects the nature of true discipleship. Sanctification theology properly puts into place the need for *hesed* but also discipline. Depending on the tradition, some may view sanctification as entirely achieved without works. Others may view sanctification as only works. However, when focusing on the overarching patterns of sanctification in multiple traditions, the importance of both *hesed* and discipline can be seen. This chapter aims to focus on the similarities that can be found in the theology of sanctification from Luther, Calvin, and Wesley.

As much Wesleyan sanctification is based on his works regarding Christian perfection, the nuanced nature of his theology must be accounted for by looking at his life. Just as the life of other theologians must be looked at as a whole. Trueman's assessment of Luther's view of sanctification may be correct. He mentions the dangers of proof texting a theology that is so nuanced and embedded in Luther's whole life.[1] Many attempt to focus on the details of sanctification theology by parsing out the differences of theologians. The best solution that can be applied is to focus not on the differences – as important as they may be - but to focus first on the pattern of sanctification. There is an

[1] Carl R. Trueman, *Luther on the Christian Life: Cross and Freedom*, Theologians on the Christian life (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 160–161.

overarching pattern of sanctification theology is remarkably consistent regardless of Wesleyan, Arminian, Reformed, or Lutheran backgrounds.

There are attempts to differentiate sanctification by scrutinizing the so-called contradictions in Wesley's writings.[2] Demarest mentions "the Gradual Process of Becoming Holy" as a distinct Reformed Evangelical view in which 1) a distinction between justification and sanctification exists, 2) sanctification is a lifelong process, 3) a degree of sanctification exists and 4) it "is not man's autonomous work."[3] All these points of distinction can be found in Wesley's writings. Differences in these distinctions can also be found when comparing the writings of Wesley with his past and present contemporaries. However, instead of highlighting the distinctiveness which can be divisive at best and lead to a misunderstanding of Wesley at worst, this chapter will focus on the pattern of sanctification. Without minimizing the differences and distinctives, the focus of this chapter will be to 1) uncover these patterns of sanctification through Wesley's theology of sanctification and 2) show the same emerging patterns woven in the theology of Luther and Calvin. Wesley's framework of sanctification through his idea on Christian perfection will be the starting point to extrapolate the pattern and what I hope to accomplish is to see the application of this same pattern to the theology of sanctification across multiple traditions. The similarities will be highlighted in hopes that those who have difficulties in their spiritual disciplines may be encouraged to continue in their journey with Christ regardless of their tradition.

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[2] Bruce A. Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2006), 391.

[3] Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation*, 401.

Also, much discourse on sanctification has taken a life of its own. For example, the concept of "second blessing" has taken the role of an ecstatic experience in the Pentecostal tradition.[4] One must be careful to properly define, or redefine, the language used by Wesley and his contemporaries to best reflect the original meaning in the original context as much of the terms have become muddled by new interpretations that fail to look at the personal journey within the context of the writers. Just as ignorance of the narrative of Paul's journey in the book of Acts can lead to bad exegesis of his epistles, we must also carefully consider the personal journey of Wesley to properly understand his theology of sanctification.

The first section of this chapter will deal with the distinction between justification and sanctification. Some make the mistake of misapplying, or overapplying, a certain aspect of theology into everything. One could argue that the antinomianism is a result of misapplying the concepts of soteriology into living out faith. Predestination may be applicable to salvation and justification, but it does not mean all of our actions taken in living out faith are predestined. Justifying grace and sanctifying grace have been nicely termed and distinguished by Wesley because the distinction was a major issue for theologians like Wesley, Calvin, and Luther. They went to great lengths to differentiate the two but also to emphasize how both were inextricably linked. It is important to understand why the distinction was made because a misunderstanding or ignorance of the distinction may single handedly be the greatest reason believers do not feel the need to move on to sanctification or fail to recognize the grave danger of failing to adapt spiritual practices. Just as James mentions that faith without works is dead (Jas 2:14-26), it is

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[4] Peter G. Stromberg, "Wesleyan Sanctification and the Ethic of Self-Realization," *Ethos* 43, no. 4 (2015): 433.

imperative that sanctification may not merely be a cerebral exercise. Especially in light of the issues facing the context where many fail to adapt new spiritual disciplines or have a laxed view on consistent spiritual practices, highlighting why the differentiation was made between justification and sanctification will, in turn, reveal the importance of having spiritual disciplines in one's life.

The goal of the second section is to establish a pattern that emerges through Wesleyan sanctification theology and compare it to other theologies of sanctification. There is a noticeable and applicable pattern that can be adapted to encourage believers to continue in their spiritual practices. The focus is not about the particular differences but about the similarities of those who have a heart to follow Christ. The pattern that emerges is the framework in which one must process how their spiritual disciplines will play out in their lives.

Before diving into the pattern of sanctification, the terms used by theologians must be defined. Certainly, many other terms were used to point to and describe sanctification but the most representative terms of the idea of sanctification will be used. This chapter will treat the terms "Christian Perfection" with the emphasis of achieving "Perfect Love" in Wesley's writings as the representative vernacular for sanctification. Calvin used "Regeneration" and continual "Renewal" to explain the work of ongoing sanctification. One of the main dichotomies used to show this process was the "Mortification" of sin and "Vivification" by Christ. Calvin used these terms to explain the second benefit of the "twofold grace of God." Finally, what Luther describes as the "second kind of righteousness" or "proper righteousness" will be used to represent Luther's thoughts on sanctification. It is important to parse out such terms used to define

what we now call sanctification since many terms have since taken on different meanings and definitions in our contemporary context.

Justification and Sanctification – Why the Distinction is Important

Although this chapter will not deal with specific spiritual disciplines, understanding why justification and sanctification were distinguished from each other will prove the conceptual framework of why spiritual disciplines are critical in our spiritual journey. It can be easy for believers to muddle the lines of justification and sanctification. When this happens, spiritual vitality suffers. A fellow clergy once said that the decline of the United Methodist Church may be contributed to a church that refuses to move beyond justifying grace into sanctifying grace. A church that limits her focus on God's grace of justification is a dying church. However, it is difficult to move beyond. This rings true because although there is the inseparable nature of God's grace through Christ on the cross with our faith, living out our faith out is a life beyond the cross is what our spiritual journey should be about. Watson suggests that "any form of Methodism that is not clearly connected to the doctrine of entire sanctification has no future."[5] Many view sanctification as the next step in action of faith but the question is why so many fail to take this next step. Drawing careful distinctions between justification and sanctification can provide some answers.

First, it is the order of sanctification and justification. While salvation and sanctification are inextricably linked, sanctification does not come before justification. Demarest explains it best by making the distinction between the holiness in principle and

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[5] Kevin M. Watson, *Perfect Love : Recovering Entire Sanctification : The Lost Power of the Methodist Movement* (Franklin, TN: Seedbed Publishing, 2021), 8.

practice. While justification makes us holy in principle, it is sanctification that shows holiness in practice.[6] The point is that a difference and a line of delineation between justification and sanctification exists. Wesley, to the question on how he differs from other clergy within the Anglican church says, "I believe justification to be wholly distinct from sanctification, and necessarily antecedent to it."[7] Martin Luther preached about "Two Kinds of Righteousness." While true sanctification cannot occur without justification, sanctification can never be a means to justification. This is not to discount the deep and unbreakable link of sanctification and justification. Venema puts it best when writing his thoughts on Calvin's *Twofold Grace*. The reason for distinction between the two is due to the difference in forgiven status versus the process of transforming from our sinful condition.[8] Highlighting the differences between justification and sanctification puts the focus of sanctification theology to be about the theology of the process in which our lives are transformed.

In relation to the first point, sanctification can also never be the means to an assurance of salvation. To be more specific, the deeds, or works, coming from sanctification should not be used as the groundwork for an assurance of faith. Wesley in his dialogue with Peter Bohler mentions that he needed to renounce his reliance on his own works of righteousness and put his trust in Christ alone for his "sole justification, sanctification, and redemption."[9] In his *Plain Account of Christian Perfection* he

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[6] Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation*, 384.

[7] John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, 3rd ed., vol. 1, The Works of John Wesley (London, United Kingdom: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, 1872), 224.

[8] Cornelis P. Venema, "Calvin's Understanding of the 'Twofold Grace of God' and Contemporary Ecumenical Discussion of the Gospel," *Mid-America Journal of theology* 18 (2007): 76.

[9] Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, 1:102.

mentions specifically that all of salvation belongs to the grace of God.[10] Wesley's emphasis on assurance can be seen in his reaction to Arvid Gradin's definition of "the full assurance of faith." The assurance had more to do with the confidence in God from the deliverance of *sinful desires*.[11] This contrasts with the famous journal entry in Aldersgate where the emphasis was on the assurance of salvation. The understanding that his sins were taken away and that he was saved "from the law of sin and death."[12] stands in contrast to the desire to sin. Wesley's Aldersgate experience is more about the deliverance from the consequences of sin. To use Demarest's distinction of principle and practice, Wesley's assurance of salvation as an assurance of principle while Wesley's assurance of faith in terms of sanctification has to do with the practice of holiness.

Refusing to move to sanctifying grace by staying within the confines of justifying grace has deep ramifications. If we are to be merely content with being delivered from the consequences of sin, and not our sinful desires, there is no reason to do anything with our faith. It is the very definition of antinomianism as there is no point in following God's commands and Christ's teachings. Wesley was keenly aware of this pitfall. Wesley's advice to those who have been 'renewed in love.' "Beware of Antinomianism; 'making void the law,' or any part of it, 'through faith.' Enthusiasm naturally leads to this; indeed, they can scarce be separated."[13] An enthusiasm for the grace that led to faith without works can seep into our faith so much so that we may forget about the works that

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[10] John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, 3rd ed., vol. 11, The Works of John Wesley (London, United Kingdom: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, 1872), 374.

[11] Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, 11:369.

[12] Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, 1:103.

[13] Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, 11:430–431.

are necessary to continue in faith. The main driver for formulating sanctification theology was precisely to prevent antinomianism. All the discourse of distinguishing sanctification from justification in all traditions may, to a certain extent, be attributed to this tension. Even non-traditional views of sanctification suggest something more than just a feeling of grace through salvation. Sanchez and Johnson suggest in their model of sanctification from Spirit Christology, it is Jesus' incarnate nature that lived a life of worship informs us to do the same.[14]

Another reason for the need for the distinction is due to the order. Spiritual discipline in sanctification, thus, must start in the right place. Inward holiness must lead to outward holiness. It cannot start with works and must start with the righteousness given to us as a gift through Christ. Wesley's experience at Aldersgate shows the order between justification and sanctification. Wesley, who was a staunch believer in spiritual discipline says about his spiritual discipline when he starts his journey of sanctification that "Now these were, in truth, as much my own works as visiting the sick or clothing the naked; and the union with God thus pursued, was as really my own righteousness, as any I had before pursued under another name."[15] If there is no distinction, than one may do their best to be a good Methodist but in vain just as Wesley had done in much of his life before understanding justification that begets sanctification.

In line with the need for distinction between justification and sanctification, their inseparability becomes apparent. For our spiritual disciplines truly be in line with sanctification, we must not separate the two. Wesley shows the inseparable but distinct

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[14] Leopoldo A. Sánchez M. and Oscar Garcia-Johnson, *Sculptor Spirit: Models of Sanctification from Spirit Christology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2019), 196.

[15] Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, 1:100.

nature of the two through his oft used term "inward and outward holiness." The commentaries by Wesley are numbered with this phrase. His commentary on 1 Timothy 6:11 highlights the inseparable nature of the two the best. In his comments on faith, Wesley defines faith "in the general and full sense: namely, a divine supernatural sight of God; chiefly in respect of his mercy in Christ. This faith is the foundation of righteousness, the support of godliness, the root of every grace of the Spirit" and terms of love, he defines it as" everything that is good; he, as it were, penetrates whatever he treats of with love, the glorious spring of all inward and outward holiness."[16] This brief comment shows the attitude in which we ought to approach spiritual discipline in sanctification. The start of spiritual discipline must be grounded in faith that comes through Christ, that is, justification. What also must be emphasized that it is through Christ that we are able to experience the gift of the Spirit. This great gift of the Spirit is the source of inward and outward holiness. Wesley makes the distinction but shows the inseparability of justification through faith alone and sanctification through the works led by the very faith that came about through justification. Without Christ, there is no gift of the Spirit and without the Spirit are empty works which will be touched on at end of this section by discussing the wrong interpretations of sanctification.

If we could find the equivalent of Wesleyan terms of inward and outward holiness in Calvin's vernacular it would be the twofold grace of God. Calvin's distinction highlights the conceptual distinction in a much more concise manner through his concept of the twofold grace of God. Venema's framework of the distinction that Calvin made between justification and sanctification highlights the conceptual difference more

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[16] John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament*, 4th ed. (New York, NY: J. Soule and T. Mason, 1818), 588.

concisely. He categorizes the distinction as the distinction between Christological and pneumatological works, we can see a separate but inseparable relationship between the two graces. He does so by analyzing Calvin's phrase "faith without works justifies." in Calvin's commentary on Ezekiel.[17] While Venema does not mention this directly in his writing, one can draw the conclusion that in one sense justification must be and is solely contributed to the grace of Christ. The works of sanctification are through the gift of Christ, the Holy Spirit. Since the Holy Spirit is a gift from Christ, the two graces are inseparable but, at the same time, separate. Both justification and sanctification can be attributed to Christ, but the work of justification is not through the direct intervention of the Holy Spirit within us as it is in the case of Sanctification. It is the order that is important. Faith cannot be begotten from works but works are always begotten from faith. However, in many churches today, the later part of the statement is forgotten and all that seems to remain is the ostensible antinomian statement that faith without works justifies.

The failure to link justification and sanctification leads to empty works. Sanctification is misidentified and looks vastly different when not linked with justification. For some, like Wesley before Aldersgate, may view sanctification as a means to justification. However, for others, when the element of Christ and the Spirit are missing, it may merely be a way to know oneself more deeply. While sanctification is most certainly related to soteriology and psychology, it becomes skewed when the purpose of sanctification is salvation or self-reflection.

Sanctification must not be defined as a process of personal reformation. The tension between the absolute power of God and individual's benefit needs to be

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[17] Venema, "Calvin's Understanding of the 'Twofold Grace of God' and Contemporary Ecumenical Discussion of the Gospel," 83–84.

addressed. Stromberg argues that Methodism birthed by Arminianism eroded the orthodox values upheld by Calvinism when Arminianism was introduced. The higher authority of God was challenged when Arminius argued for the human capacity to choose salvation.[18] Sanctification had been in the realm of a more monergistic idea before Arminius argued for a synergistic approach to faith. The issue of the Arminian and Calvinist debate is not the idea of monergism and synergism. There are clear monergistic and syngergistic aspects of sanctification because it is tied to justification, a gift from God, not based on our merit. However, there still must be a response of some sort to live out the justification that involves the very beings that live it out. The issue is when the monergistic ideas were eschewed for an exclusively synergistic approach. This introduced a more humanistic approach to sanctification. When this humanistic element is overemphasized in sanctification, the theology of sanctification of Wesley loses all relevance and gets replaced with something markedly different. According to Stromberg, sanctification has diverged into a repeatable experience of the Holy Spirit and an emphasis on the "second blessing" in the Pentecostals and the Liberals emphasizing the need to follow God as a means to know oneself more deeply.[19] The crux of the argument for Stromberg is that sanctification will simply become a method of self-realization as the means to become more God-like. [20] One can see how Wesley's view on sanctification

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[18] Stromberg, "Wesleyan Sanctification and the Ethic of Self-Realization," 426.

[19] Stromberg, "Wesleyan Sanctification and the Ethic of Self-Realization," 436–437.

[20] Stromberg, "Wesleyan Sanctification and the Ethic of Self-Realization," 435.

that starts with "the renewal of our heart, after the image of Him that created us."[21] Can be easily misconstrued when one views self-realization as a renewal of our heart.

Finke and Stark mention are in line with one of Stromberg's strains of Methodism. They put it as a process known as "sect transformation" or "secularization." In the Methodist church, Finke and Stark attribute it to increasing affluence and higher requirements for clergy. The changing Methodist church began to "lift restrictions on behavior and to soften doctrines that had served to set the sect apart from its social environment."[22] Sanctification when viewed through a secular lens can easily be misinterpreted from the intent of Wesley. Hence, the boundaries on what sanctification means when understanding spiritual disciplines must be clear.

Spiritual disciplines are not a way for self-glorification or benefit for that matter. Demarest uses an example of Walter Rauschenbusch who argued for an anthropocentric sanctification which resulted in an emphasis on human striving rather than a theocentric view that emphasizes the working of the Holy Spirit.[23] The theocentricity of Wesleyan sanctification theology can be seen in Wesley's correspondence with Miss Jane Hilton. He writes that God has delivered her from "the root of bitterness, from inbred, as well as actual, sin" and for her to "Stir up the gift of God that is in you! Look unto Him that is mighty to save! … He is a God nigh at hand. Only believe; and help, while yet you ask, is given! Trust in Him, and conquer all."[24] Sanctification does not start with self but starts

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[21] Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, 1:224.

[22] Finke and Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776 - 2005*, locs. 1951–1953.

[23] Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation*, 387.

[24] John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, 3rd ed., vol. 12, The Works of John Wesley (London, United Kingdom: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, 1872), 378.

with "the life of God in the soul of man; a participation of the divine nature; the mind that was in Christ; or, the renewal of our heart, after the image of Him that created us."[25] While this chapter will deal with how reflection and introspection of self can aid us into a better understanding of the workings of sanctification, it must be made clear that the end of sanctification is not self-realization.

The Common Patterns of Sanctification

This theological foundation is not in any way meant to discount the especially important distinctions of theological backgrounds as they may have much bearing on how we approach our spiritual disciplines. Before getting into the details of the commonality of sanctification theologies, the differences must be briefly discussed. The differences surrounding sanctification are related to extent (i.e., how much holiness in life or moral perfection can we achieve in this lifetime) and time (i.e., are we instantaneously sanctified when justified or is sanctification a process). There is no extent of justification for it is a once and for all sacrifice of Christ in which we stand justified before God. We are either justified or not through the blood of Christ nor is there a time element to justification. When we come to Christ and accept him as our savior, we are justified. There is no process. Sanctification, on the other hand, differs based on theological tradition in both the axes of extent and time.

Although there is a difference between the extent and time aspect of sanctification depending on the theological tradition, a remarkably similar pattern of sanctification emerges. There are similar elements in every tradition. It is akin to the dedication service

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[25] Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, 1:225.

of Baptists and infant baptisms of Methodists. For a believer's baptism, there is an equivalent confirmation in other traditions. There are markedly different theologies and reasons behind them and the purpose is not to discount the crucial differences that have far reaching ramifications on how faith is lived out. However, in the case of different baptism traditions, there is a similar element and pattern of initiation of babies and adults. In the case of infants, it is either an infant dedication or an infant baptism. In the case of adults, it is confirmation or believer's baptisms. While theological there are some differences, functionally they are remarkably similar. The same can be said about sanctification. The pattern or elements that will be discussed are 1) the Holy Spirit that changes the heart, 2) Introspection that leads to a resentment of sin, 3) human limitations that lead to a continued seeking for help, and 4) joy that comes from sanctification.

The starting point of sanctification is a changed heart from the Holy Spirit. While theologians may disagree with Wesley on whether this changed heart occurs immediately after justification or it is a second blessing, they all agree on the presence of a changed heart. There can be no sanctification without a heart that is changed. The preamble by John Wesley in his seminal work *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* should set the tone and define that Wesleyan Sanctification theology starts with a changed heart. Wesley was inspired by the writings of Bishop Taylor and Thomas Kempis. Taylor mentions, in his section on *Purity of Intention*, that "a holy end sanctifies all these and all other actions which can be made holy, and gives distinction to them, and procures acceptance." The intention of the person to make everything holy is inseparable from the

action. The first rule of intentions is "in every action reflect upon the end."[26] Taylor's influence in Wesley's theology of sanctification is evident as Wesley later concludes his sermon, *the Circumcision of the Heart,* that "the sum of the perfect law" is "the circumcision of the heart." He continues and states "Have a pure intention of heart, a steadfast regard to his glory in all your actions."[27] The differentiating factor of justification and sanctification for Wesley was the new heart. Wesley, in his journal, mentions the preaching of Christian David and describes "Thrice he described the state of those who are "weak in faith," who are justified, but have not yet a new, clean heart; who have received forgiveness through the blood of Christ, but have not received the constant indwelling of the Holy Ghost."[28] For Wesley, the wellspring of sanctification starts at the intent of the heart that is changed through the Holy Spirit.

In the case of Luther, the intent of the heart is intricately linked to justification. Forde mentions that sanctification for Luther is "simply the art of getting used to justification."[29] Luther in his sermon *Two Kinds of Righteousness*, talks about alien righteousness as the "works by grace alone… inwardly draws us to Christ... set opposite original sin."[30] There is an inward change of the heart. The realization of such change in one life comes from the presence of the Spirit. Luther continues to talk about the second

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[26] Reginald Herber, *The Whole Works of the Right Rev. Jeremy Taylor*, vol. 3 (London, United Kingdom: Longman, 1850), 16–17.

[27] Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, 5:212.

[28] Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, 1:117.

[29] Gerhard O. Forde, "The Lutheran View," in *Christian Spirituality : Five Views of Sanctification*, by Donald Alexander and Sinclair B. Ferguson (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 13.

[30] Else Marie Wiberg Pedersen, "Sermon on Two Kinds of Righteousness, 1519," in *The Annotated Luther*, ed. Kirsi I. Stjerna, Hans J. Hillerbrand, and Timothy J. Wengert, vol. 2, Word and Faith (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015), 15.

kind of righteousness as the product of the first righteousness by linking the two through the fruit of the Spirit and being born of the Spirit.[31]

In Calvin's commentary on Acts 5:31, he states "for Christ giveth us the Spirit of regeneration for this cause, that he may renew us inwardly; to the end that a new life may afterward follow the newness of the mind and heart… but whence have we this will, save only because God changeth our heart"[32] He further states in his *Institutes* that he considers the efficacy of justification to depend on the "Spirit of regeneration."[33] Despite the different traditions, the start of the journey of sanctification happens when there is a change in one's heart and the work of the Holy Spirit takes place.

Another hallmark of sanctification is introspection of the heart. For Wesley, Kempis' work had an even stronger emphasis on the introspection of the heart. Self-examination is a key theme throughout his work. There exists a dichotomy of inward emotions toward God or to self. Kempis does not view this as a relative scale but rather, a calling to be wholly devoted to God and goes as far to say that we must carefully examine our hearts lest we be deceived by self-love "under the colour of love of God."[34] Wesley highlights "the nature and extent of inward religion, the religion of the heart."[35]

Introspection was apparent in the life of Wesley and how he lived his faith out. If we are to assume that Aldersgate was the turning point for Wesley and the start of his

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[31] Pedersen, "Sermon on Two Kinds of Righteousness, 1519," 17–18.

[32] Jean Calvin, *Commentary on Acts*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1844), 163.

[33] Jean Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1845), 513.

[34] Thomas Kempis, *The Christian's Pattern; Or, A Treatise of the Imitation of Christ*, ed. John Wesley (London, United Kingdom: C. Rivington, 1735), xv.

[35] Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, 11:366.

sanctification, Wesley's thoughts in the aftermath could give us a glimpse of what Wesley experienced in his personal sanctification. Just two days after, Wesley writes about his temptations but how he overcame them only to "grieve the Spirit" a few days later.[36] The seriousness in which he took his inward reflection highlights the element of introspection in sanctification. We see a pattern of not just a writing of what he did well but a deep reflection that shows a resentment of sin.

Luther defines the second kind of righteousness as "mortifying the flesh and crucifying the self-centered desires."[37] The flesh and self-centered desires only become apparent through an honest introspection of one's heart. According to Luther, the individuals who truly have faith "feel more pain over the sin of their offenders than over the loss or offense to themselves."[38] The weight of sin is so great that Luther preached not of mere forgiveness but sorrow for the wrongdoer.

Venema shows the inextricable link between repentance and sanctification in his work on Calvin's twofold grace. He states "Repentance…means a life-long and progressive advance wrought in us by the Spirit of Christ, a process in which we are converted to God."[39] In his *Institutes*, Calvin writes about introspection in repentance by giving a seven-step pattern through using 2 Corinthians 7:2. The seven steps are "carefulness, excuse, indignation fear, desire, zeal, revenge." In this the introspection that leads to a resentment of sin comes in the form of indignation as the sinner "is offended

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[36] Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, 1:105.

[37] Pedersen, "Sermon on Two Kinds of Righteousness, 1519," 16.

[38] Pedersen, "Sermon on Two Kinds of Righteousness, 1519," 23–24.

[39] Venema, "Calvin's Understanding of the 'Twofold Grace of God' and Contemporary Ecumenical Discussion of the Gospel," 80.

with himself on recognizing his perverseness and ingratitude to God."[40] John Owen, an English Puritan in the 17th century sated in his writing *Of the Mortification of Sin in Believers* states that sanctification "cannot be done without the daily mortifying of sin."[41] The use of the term "mortification" by the Reformed tradition theologians show just how much sin is resented when we walk in the process of sanctification.

Wesley's view on Christian perfection that can be attained in this lifetime has drawn much criticism especially in light of Wesley's disclaimer on what perfection is not. In one sense, are not the "mistakes"[42] that one makes sin and thus counter to the idea of perfection? The purpose of this chapter is not to highlight the distinctions of Wesley nor to defend them. It is to highlight the commonalities of the pattern of sanctification that can be found in broadly evangelical theologies of sanctification. In this sense, Wesley's disclaimer related to mistakes can highlight the commonality of the limitation of humanity that leads to a continued seeking for help. Wesley mentions, while extrapolating on mistakes that are a transgression of the perfect law, "that that the most perfect have continual need of the merits of Christ, even for their actual transgressions…"[43] The pattern of human limitation and the need for continuing to seek help from God is present in Wesley's sanctification theology.

According to Trueman, Luther's view of the law that is unattainable by a sinful human being served as a reminder of human limitations.[44] Sanctification would

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[40] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 507–508.

[41] John Owen et al., *Overcoming Sin and Temptation* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 55.

[42] Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, 11:395.

[43] Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, 11:395.

[44] Trueman, *Luther on the Christian Life: Cross and Freedom*, 66.

eventually always hit a wall that could not be scaled in Luther's eyes. What better way to show the consistency in the pattern of sanctification by using Luther's *Preface to the Epistle to the Romans,* regarding faith, Luther mentions that it is impossible for the human heart to accomplish anything, but that faith is the work of God within us.[45] Perhaps Calvin's emphasis on the grace of God shows the limitation of humans and a need to rely on God's strength alone. Calvin writes in his commentary of Acts; repentance is only possible because God changes our hearts.[46]

Finally, while there is a wide variation in the depth of sanctification can be achieved, the joy from the seeking of realizing God's glory in one's life is constant. Wesley mentions in his description of a "perfect Christian" the everlasting happiness that overflows with peace and joy. "His joy is full, and all his bones cry out, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, …"[47] An element of sanctification that is often not emphasized enough is the presence of joy. There is a deep joy that occurs in the journey of sanctification and becomes the strength for us to continue on so that we may be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect.[48]

There is a joy in living out sanctification for both Luther and Calvin. Luther mentions that "This confidence and knowledge of divine grace make a person happy, bold, and full of gladness in his relation to God and all creatures. The Holy Ghost is

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[45] Martin Luther, *Martin Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans* (Coromandel, Australia: New Creation Publications, 1995), 7.

[46] Calvin, *Commentary on Acts*, 163.

[47] Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, 11:371.

[48] Matthew 5:48

doing this in the believer."[49] Calvin writes of the joy in the process of sanctification where one may be humbled and filled with fear when recognizing their sin only to take joy by understanding the mercy and grace of Christ.[50]

Conclusion

Sanctification is obviously linked to spiritual disciplines because the act of spiritual disciplines is a part of sanctification. While it may seem redundant to discuss sanctification, understanding the theology of sanctification answers the larger question of why spiritual disciplines are important and gives the framework and strategy of how to go about adapting and maintaining spiritual practices.

The question then is how everyday practices of discipline are linked to sanctification. How we experience everyday practices have a great bearing on how much we can internalize and apply the theology of sanctification in our lives. Wesley mentions some of those who are "renewed in love" need temperance, stating "They do not steadily use that kind and degree of food, which they know, or might know, would most conduce to the health, strength, and vigour of the body: Or they are not temperate in sleep; they do not rigorously adhere to what is best both for body and mind;"[51] Wesley too seems to have an understanding of the link between everyday practices of discipline and sanctification.

Understanding the inseparable but sperate nature of two concepts can be a cerebral exercise when reading theology. However, when something similar is

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[49] Luther, *Martin Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans*, 8.

[50] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 498.

[51] Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, 11:426.

experienced in everyday life, it becomes easier to apply. What the scale says about weight and health have an inseparable relationship but must be viewed separately at the same time. Many fall into the trap of poor health when looking only at the number on the scale. Just as Wesley was not spiritually healthy because he did the works of sanctification without understanding justification first. However, many are in poor health because they do not look at the scale. Williams mentions this tendency in the spiritual realm as well. We tend to "conceal my true feelings from my knowing self."[52] The fight against antinomianism exists because some fail to consider the importance of the works of sanctification and only focus on justification.

When one understands the causal relationship between weight and health one can better understand how to manage our personal discipline in health. The issues Wesley addresses regarding sanctification can be quite subjective and ethereal or it may take a great deal of time for some to realize how much the Holy Spirit has led them in their journey. Many things related to everyday life are much faster and concrete. The numbers on the scale and bank account are concrete. The change in physical and financial health can be noticed very quickly.

The pattern of sanctification is applicable in the same way. We know if we have such a radical change in our heart when we have experienced a change in our desires to a lesser extent. The key to personal practices of discipline is a change in desire. Although it is not a full-scale change that Wesley mentions, there is a change, nonetheless. In our personal practices we must always keep ourselves accountable and learn how to resent

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[52] Rowan Williams, "'Know Thyself': What Kind of an Injunction?" in *Spiritual Life*, ed. Michael McGhee, Talking philosophy (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2024), 344.

the root cause of our unhealthy financial or physical health. It follows the same pattern of sanctification of introspection that leads to a resentment of sin.

Finally, how much more will we be able to feel the presence of Christ in our lives with joy when we understand our limitations. The issue with personal practices is that it is often a fight against self and help may not be readily available. In the case of our walk in faith, we have the work of Spirit to guide us! Or when we receive help and assistance in our personal practices, we may be able to learn the value and joy of what it feels like to receive assistance in the midst of our limitations.

CHAPTER FIVE

INTERDISCIPLINARY FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

The interdisciplinary foundation which provides the framework of the relationship between discipleship and spiritual disciplines is the theory of behavioral economics. Although theology and economics may seem far apart, the field of economics shows that it is a highly effective lens to view why certain people choose to become disciples and become more devoted to spiritual practices. After all, the field of economics is a study of all human behavior because the essence of economics is a study of not money but choice.[1] It is a choice to follow Jesus and to obey his commands through practicing spiritual disciplines. This makes economics an ideal framework to analyze the issue of the lack of spiritual discipline in the lives of many of our parishioners. The field of economics is based on the concepts of agency and scarcity and defined as "the study of how agents choose to allocate scarce resources."[2] Time and effort are scarce resources that agents must choose to allocate in spiritual disciplines or other things. Because the field of economics attempts to explain why agents choose to allocate their resources, it is

[1] Daron Acemoglu, David I. Laibson, and John A. List, *Economics*, 3rd ed. (Harlow, United Kingdom: Pearson, 2022), 37.

[2] Acemoglu, Laibson, and List, *Economics*, 38.

fitting to use a framework in economics to see how this plays out biblically, historically, and theologically.

Within the field of economics, there are many theories that have developed to better explain why people choose what they choose. Behavioral economics is a further development, or amendment, of traditional economic assumptions that refine how certain behaviors are explained and predicted.[3] It is in these refinements that behavioral economics offers where a shift of emphasis can be seen. While traditional economics has looked at the result or the consequences of choices, behavioral economics takes a deeper look at the reasoning behind the choices. Behavioral economics, which attempts to make realistic assumptions about the judgement and decision-making process, is multi-disciplinary in nature because it includes elements of sociology and psychology to inform economic thinking.[4] This can be the key to unlocking the reason as to why parishioners fail to adapt spiritual disciplines despite fully understanding the wonderful potential of living them out. Many spend a lot of energy trying to encourage the congregation by teaching such consequences of a life full of spiritual disciplines but find it ineffective. Behavioral economics emphasizes what factors affect choices. Thus, it puts the focus on discipleship not on the consequences but on the change in perspective so that there is a shift in the reasoning behind spiritual disciplines.

While many theories have been used in behavioral economics, this chapter will deal with prospect theory and bounded rationality theory as they represent the two theories that best reflect the change in perspective that may be the key to encouraging

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[3] Acemoglu, Laibson, and List, *Economics*, 385–386.

[4] Philip Corr and Anke C. Plagnol, *Behavioral Economics: The Basics*, 2nd ed., The Basic Series (London, United Kingdom: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2023), 4.

church members to take on spiritual disciplines. The problem is that members of Milton United Methodist Church have not been discipled, therefore preventing them from exercising certain spiritual disciplines. I hypothesize that if members participate in a study about the relationship between discipline and discipleship, then they will be equipped to equate the practical discipline from their lives with Christian discipleship. Prospect theory offers a roadmap that shows how people actually behave instead of how they should behave.[5] The tension in ministry is the disconnect between how those who profess faith should behave and putting it in action. Prospect theory allows a reference point to show why certain discipleship programs work while some fail despite both dealing with how believers should behave. Bounded rationality offers a framework to understand why so many fail to adapt new spiritual disciplines. Applying behavioral economics will be the undergirding pedogeological philosophy of my project which is designed to test the hypothesis that the missing link to practicing discipleship is the lack of understanding of the relationship between discipline and discipleship.

Utility Theory

While utility theory is exactly what behavioral economics critiques, it nonetheless presents the framework in which we often use in our attempt to teach our congregations the benefits of spiritual disciplines in discipleship. Hence, the tenets of utility theory must be presented to properly identify what some may have gotten wrong in terms of thinking about encouraging others to change their behaviors to become disciples of Christ.

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[5] Corr and Plagnol, *Behavioral Economics*, 116.

First, we must talk about the relationship between risk and faith. Decision theory is quite linear when the decision maker knows with certainty the possible outcomes of a specific action.[6] Economists make the distinction between certain enjoyments and risky enjoyments with the latter being a situation where there is a probably of gain and not certainty.[7] Although, we would like to believe in Jesus' teachings and the outcome of following his words with absolute certainty, the supposition used in this project is that believing in Jesus' words carry risk. We do know with certainty of the judgement that is to come because none of us have actually experienced and observed it. The actual consequences are reserved for a time to come that has not yet been realized. Hence, faith needs to be viewed as a risky context for the decision maker. It is in this environment that the frameworks to identify why people make the decisions they make can be applied.

The traditional view was the utility theory otherwise known as value theory. Von Neumann and Morgenstern introduced this concept by suggesting that the decision maker will make a decision corresponding to gain the maximum value or utility.[8] Utility theory became the tool used to predict *rational* decision making as it was the assumption that the decision maker will ultimately use all scarce goods to create marginal utility.[9] The issue with this framework is due to its overemphasis on the results and underemphasis on past experiences. It is the assumption that people will always make rational decisions based on the results of greater utility. This presents some issues.

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[6] Silvia Bacci and Bruno Chiandotto, *Introduction to Statistical Decision Theory: Utility Theory and Causal Analysis* (Milton, FL: CRC Press, 2019), 118.

[7] Emil Kauder, *History of Marginal Utility Theory* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016), 206.

[8] Bacci and Chiandotto, *Introduction to Statistical Decision Theory: Utility Theory and Causal Analysis*, 4.

[9] Kauder, *History of Marginal Utility Theory*, xv.

First, there is an underemphasis on past experiences that can dictate decision making. In utility theory, the concept of consequentiality states that past choices must be ignored when making the optimal choice.[10] The concept of sunk costs in the business world best illustrates the decision-making framework. It is not about what the company had invested beforehand. It is a sunk cost and therefore should not be put into consideration when making future financial decisions. The reality is that there have been many businesses and even governments who have fallen into the trap of being caught up in sunk costs.[11] The framework of only looking at the results does not fully explain what motivates people to make decisions.

Second, there is an overemphasis of the results. While there are intricacies in the mathematic model that have been criticized, the idea that people will act according to what will maximize their utility is the framework that many have adapted. Von Neumann and Morgenstern's theory is based on the evaluation by the decision maker of the results of their decisions, or the overall utility of the consequences.[12] In addition, many have been influenced by Bentham's works. On his *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* he states "A thing is said to promote the interest… of an individual, when it tends to add to the sum total of his pleasures:"[13] To break it down further, under this framework, it is assumed that the people will make decisions based on the overall utility

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[10] Bacci and Chiandotto, *Introduction to Statistical Decision Theory: Utility Theory and Causal Analysis*, 122.

[11] Richard H. Thaler, "From Cashews to Nudges," *The American Economic Review* 108, no. 6 (2018): 1270.

[12] Bacci and Chiandotto, *Introduction to Statistical Decision Theory: Utility Theory and Causal Analysis*, 120–121.

[13] Jeremy Bentham, *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (Ontario, Canada: Batoche Books, 1999), 15.

that comes from consequences of the decisions they choose. There is a disproportionate emphasis on the results and on our ability to accurately calculate the overall utility of the consequences. Under this framework, should a believer decide to adopt a spiritual discipline, they will adopt it because the consequences will be of greater utility to them, and it is also assumed that the decision-maker will be aware of all the benefits that come with adapting the spiritual discipline. Thus, the motivation for discipleship and starting spiritual disciplines has been an exercise about whether certain spiritual disciplines can improve the overall utility of a person's life.

There are obvious pitfalls in this way of thinking in the ministry context. Primarily, this is counter to Jesus' own teachings on what it means to follow him as his disciple (Mt 8:20). Denying oneself and taking up the cross daily (Lk 9:23) does not seem to be a value-added proponent in one's life. The very words by Jesus of denying oneself seems to suggest that it our choices are no longer about maximizing our utility. There are churches who encourage the spiritual discipline of tithing and offering refunds if they find that God did not do something in their life. It is this assumption that if one were to adopt a spiritual discipline, it would add to one's utility. Also, it assumes that the believer will be able to clearly discern what God's good is in their life. While anecdotally, there may be churches where such endeavors have worked, it may be due to the emphasis on lowering the perceived risk more than the prospect of increased utility. The shift in the framework from utility theory to behavioral economics may better illustrate this.

Prospect Theory

Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky gave a critique of expected utility theory by highlighting two aspects of prospects that have a greater impact than the overall utility of choice. The first is the prospect of certainty can dictate choice rather than the overall utility of the choice. The second is whether the prospect is positive or negative. [14] In a later article, Kahneman and Tversky summarize these key elements as a tendency by decision-makers to overreact to small probabilities and underreact to moderate to high probabilities. There is also a concave relationship between the value and amount of gains, while a steeper convex relationship exists with value and loss.[15] While the implication of this framework will be parsed out, the emphasis is not only on the overall outcome of the choice but there is also an interest in how things other than the outcome are considered.

Kahneman and Tversky have organized their findings in prospect theory to five major phenomena, all of which have a bearing on how one could go about approaching the choice of whether to take on spiritual disciplines or not. The issue of gains and losses is termed *framing effects*. That is, decision-makers frame gains differently than losses even though they may be of the same value. The difference in tendencies depending on probabilities is termed *nonlinear preferences*. How probable an outcome is and its effects on decisions are not linear. Decision-makers also are more likely to prefer situations where the source is known. This is termed *source dependence*. There is also a tendency for decision-makers to be *risk seeking* and choose large gains with smaller probabilities

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[14] Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, "Prospect Theory: An Analysis of Decision under Risk," *Econometrica* 47, no. 2 (1979): 263.

[15] Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, "Advances in Prospect Theory: Cumulative Representation of Uncertainty," *Journal of Risk and Uncertainty* 5, no. 4 (1992): 297.

and large probable losses over small sure losses. Finally, the steep convex relationship between values and losses shows the tendency for *loss aversion* for the decision-maker.[16]

These five phenomena serve as a good framework to see why so many may be reluctant to take on spiritual disciplines. It is not because they are lazy or have never met Jesus. It may be an issue of any or all these five phenomena that have not been satisfactorily explained in discipleship. That is, we need to examine the undergirding philosophies of our discipleship program. The framing effect which illustrates how perception changes depending on whether it is a gain or a loss, shows how we must frame spiritual discipline. Preferences are based more on how they are labeled and not based on relevant differences between options. Even if one was to pay the same amount, one would be more likely to choose the discount over a surcharge.[17] People are more likely to choose a product that is $100 with a $10 discount than the same product that is sold for $80 with a $10 surcharge. The question of how spiritual disciplines are framed is important. Is tithing framed as a loss of income or as a discount of what is owed to God?

Nonlinear preferences can be applied to our approach in discipleship. One must ask the question of how much work was done to change the perceived probability. In the example of refunding tithes by a church, if one were to use the lens of nonlinear preferences in prospect theory, parishioners may have been more likely to tithe because the probability and extent of loss were lessened when the prospect of a refund was offered. Instead of a certain loss of whatever was tithed, the perceived value of the loss decreased considerably because the probability that tithing would be a loss was decreased.

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[16] Kahneman and Tversky, "Advances in Prospect Theory: Cumulative Representation of Uncertainty," 298.

[17] Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, "Rational Choice and the Framing of Decisions," *The Journal of Business* 59, no. 4 (1986): 261.

When coupled with the tendency to be risk seeking, these principles can be applied to starting movements of prayer in the church. Prayer needs to be reframed like Jesus' parable of the mustard seed (Mt 17:20). A small and unpolished prayer which can be perceived as very high risk has a very large potential value because God does not just answer long and lofty prayers. To better apply this concept, Bandura's theory on self-efficacy must be applied. He states, "the most effective way of building a strong sense of efficacy is through mastery experiences."[18] He continues to state that efficacy beliefs will shape the expected outcomes, favorable or adverse.[19] It can be inferred that, psychologically, risk has an inverse relationship with effort. The less self-efficacy, or effort, the higher the perceived risk. The more self-efficacy, the lower the perceived risk. In the biblical narrative of prayer, God listens to both those put in a tremendous effort into prayer like he did with Hannah (1 Sm 1:12-14) but also to those with a small amount of faith. It is our default way of thinking that we can expect God to listen to our prayers when the risk is mitigated by as we shape our self-efficacy in the spiritual discipline of prayer. However, this is not the case. Nonlinear preferences show that people will be less likely to choose this course of action. However, when prayer is framed as a spiritual discipline that needs little self-efficacy it becomes in line with the risk-seeking behaviors that decision-makers take. Prayer can be viewed as small effort and risk with large gains.

The knowledge of God's word cannot be understated when we apply prospect theory to discipleship. Source dependence dictates that the more people are aware of the source the more willing they will be to choose it. Much of our discipleship emphasis is on

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[18] Albert Bandura, "An Agentic Perspective on Positive Psychology," in *Positive Psychology: Exploring the Best in People*, ed. Shane J. Lopez, vol. 1, Praeger Perspectives (Westport: Praeger, 2008), 169.

[19] Bandura, "An Agentic Perspective on Positive Psychology," 170.

doing but without understanding the situation on why spiritual discipline is important according to God's word, people will be less likely to practice discipleship. In the same vein knowledge about judgement is a necessary part of our discipleship education. There is a reason Jesus used so much language about judgement and condemnation even though he did not come to condemn (Jn 3:17). It can be argued that he understood the nature of human beings and their tendency for loss aversion. The most persuasive method may be to tell the truth about the loss that can be had if we do not live a life of a disciple of Christ.

Bounded Rationality

The relevance of behavioral economics comes from the leaning towards what decision makers already have as opposed to what they will gain. One theory which attempts to explain the starting point of decision making is bounded reality. One of the greatest frustrations in ministry comes from the dissonance between what we think as intuitive and what is actually practiced. Sunday worship attendance, or the lack thereof, can be quite frustrating when we believe that keeping the sabbath holy ought to be intuitive for those who have chosen to follow Jesus. Unless we understand the psychological mechanism behind decision making and habits, we will not have a starting point. Bounded rationality offers a paradigm in which one can gain an understanding of how habits of spiritual discipline can be formed.

Kahneman, in his Nobel Prize receiving theory, suggests created a psychological model of how choices are made by arguing of the greater role intuition plays in decision-making and that this intuition is similar to the rules of perception as they share the same

processes.[20] He suggests a two-systems approach to understand why certain decision are made: intuition is System 1 and reasoning is System 2. According to Kahneman, "The operations of System 1 are fast, automatic, effortless, associative, and often emotionally charged… governed by habit, and are therefore difficult to control or modify. The operations of System 2 are slower, serial, effortful, and deliberately controlled; they are also relative flexible and potentially rule-governed." The key differentiating factor is the amount of effort that is needed, or used, to make a decision.[21]

This has a tremendous impact on the way we view discipleship and how disciplined spiritual habits are formed. We cannot approach spiritual disciplines as something we merely need to "try harder." There is a much more complex set of systems from when we make the judgement to read the bible every day to actually deciding and acting on it every day. The two-system approach gives us a better idea on how the concept of spiritual discipline which starts with scripture ends up in our everyday lives. We must understand that spiritual disciplines are a two-system approach and must not put an emphasis on one or another but on both.

When we make a decision to become a disciple of Jesus, we are starting with System 2 Cognition. Explicit and intentional judgement is made which involves System 2 Cognition.[22] It can be inferred that our judgement to take on spiritual disciplines is a part of System 2 as well. The issue with System 2 Cognition is that it does not dictate many of our actions because of the serial and deliberate nature of it. Nonetheless, it will serve as

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[20] Daniel Kahneman, "Maps of Bounded Rationality: Psychology for Behavioral Economics," *The American Economic Review* 93, no. 5 (2003): 1450.

[21] Kahneman, "Maps of Bounded Rationality: Psychology for Behavioral Economics," 1451.

[22] Kahneman, "Maps of Bounded Rationality: Psychology for Behavioral Economics," 1452.

an important feedback mechanism until the time our perception of spiritual discipline changes. According to Kahneman, "System 2 monitors the activities of System 1."[23]

System 1 Cognition will most likely dominate the practice of spiritual disciplines. The defining characteristics of habits and discipline are remarkably similar to the System 1 Cognition category because, as mentioned by Kahneman, they are governed by habit. However, there can be cognitive operations in System 2 Cognition that can migrate to System 1 Cognition as proficiency and skill are acquired.[24] Consistent discipleship and spiritual discipline happen through System 1 Cognition. If the relationship between discipleship and spiritual disciplines can be defined using this framework, it would be to get from System 2 thinking to System 1 thinking.

The following frameworks and theories were suggested within the realm of bounded reality. Prospect theory offers insights into how this transfer may happen. That is, there needs to be a change in the vantage point. Kahneman, understands perception as reference-dependent. We perceive things based on the contrast between stimuli. The example used is a box that is perceived darker because it is surrounded by a lighter colored box and the box of the same color that is perceived lighter because it is surrounded by a darker box.[25] This suggest that no matter how much we know about spiritual discipline and discipleship, there will be no meaningful change unless there is a change in perspective.

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[23] Kahneman, "Maps of Bounded Rationality: Psychology for Behavioral Economics," 1451.

[24] Shane Frederick and Daniel Kahneman, "Representativeness Revisited: Attribute Substitution in Intuitive Judgment," in *Heuristics and Biases: The Psychology of Intuitive Judgment*, ed. Thomas Gilovich, Dale Griffin, and Daniel Kahneman (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 51.

[25] Kahneman, "Maps of Bounded Rationality: Psychology for Behavioral Economics," 1454–1455.

How discipleship and spiritual discipline is framed is important as well. Framing effects do not look how enticing a prospect looks, but rather, looks at how much information has to be computed.[26] The more complex a prospect looks, the less likely it is that System 1 Cognition will take over. Another way to put this is that decision making occurs in a much narrower frame than what we may think is rational.[27] The remarkably simple instruction on prayer in the Didache has more credence under prospect theory. Prayer does not get framed much narrower than saying the Lord's Prayer three times a day.[28]

The framework of how decision-makers frame things in a much narrower way comes in the concept of heuristics, or the propensity to simply complex tasks to make decisions.[29] This concept is in line with other psychology theories. Gershman suggests that we simplify complex objects through approximation biases.[30] He likens it to a computer codec which is designed to efficiently encode information from the raw source. Our brains function like a codec that attempts to efficiently encode information simplifying information when reproducing it instead of processing the raw data.[31] In the case of decision making, all the things that need to be considered, or System 2 Cognition, is the raw data but our System 1 Cognition uses a codec to simplify it in the form of heuristics. The issue with codecs is that the more simplified it is, the more likely it is to

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[26] Kahneman, "Maps of Bounded Rationality: Psychology for Behavioral Economics," 1458.

[27] Kahneman, "Maps of Bounded Rationality: Psychology for Behavioral Economics," 1460.

[28] Didache Ch. 8

[29] Kahneman, "Maps of Bounded Rationality: Psychology for Behavioral Economics," 1460.

[30] Samuel Gershman, *What Makes Us Smart* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2021), 107.

[31] Gershman, *What Makes Us Smart*, 109.

introduce noise and artifacts that do not accurately represent the raw information. Relying on heuristics also introduces noise and artifacts that may lead to making an uninformed decision.

Heuristics offers an insight into why there is a reluctance to take on spiritual disciplines. It also offers an insight on why merely teaching the biblical principles of spiritual discipline can have insignificant effect on discipleship. A heuristic is formed when a process called attribute substitution occurs. This is when a person does not judge or evaluate decisions based on the target attribute but forms a heuristic attribute which substitutes the target attribute to something more readily available in their mind.[32] Even when adequate information is provided, there is a tendency for decision-makers to fail to make the effort to utilize such information.[33] If our heuristic of discipleship and the required spiritual disciplines are formed with those around us, the preaching about spiritual disciplines will not matter because it will be ignored. The heuristic of looking at the church members next to them will dominate the decision-making process. When one parent decides to have their child participate in Sunday sports, that would be the attribute of discipleship mentioned in scripture will be substituted with the actual level of discipleship in the congregation. It does not matter what the preacher preaches in the pulpit because of our tendency to forgo analysis of all the information available. This is why the church culture and example led leadership of the pastor is so important. How members practice their spiritual disciplines will become the heuristic that is used. The

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[32] Frederick and Kahneman, "Representativeness Revisited: Attribute Substitution in Intuitive Judgment," 53.

[33] Frederick and Kahneman, "Representativeness Revisited: Attribute Substitution in Intuitive Judgment," 65.

closer the heuristic is to the teachings of Jesus; the more likely people will adapt spiritual disciplines.

However, not all hope is lost. We must not forget that System 1 Cognition is informed and can be changed by System 2 Cognition. Attention can be manipulated. That is, attention can be given to neglected variables by how the information is framed.[34] The theory of framing effects plays a significant role in changing our heuristics so that they are more in line with System 2 Cognition. How such framework can be utilized will be dealt with in the next sections as behavioral economic principles are applied to the biblical, historical, and theological foundations.

Behavioral Economics in Biblical Foundations

The largest question looming in the story of Matthew the tax collector is what the difference between Matthew and the other sinners versus the Pharisees was. Why is it that Matthew and sinners understood that they were sick while the Pharisees could not? We can hypothesize and look to clues in the historical context as it was done in the Biblical Foundations section. However, there is a more human level of understanding when we can apply the principles of behavioral economics and attempt to answer the question of why Matthew left everything to follow Jesus when the Pharisees could not.

Matthew and his friends seem to be more risk seeking than the Pharisees. There was a very large prospective gain in the form of restoration. That is where the focus of Matthew was. We can also make sense of the Pharisees' reluctance to follow Jesus. It would have technically been easier for the Pharisees to follow Jesus. They were already

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[34] Frederick and Kahneman, "Representativeness Revisited: Attribute Substitution in Intuitive Judgment," 69.

practicing spiritual disciplines. It seems counterintuitive that tax collectors, who would need radical life changes compared to the Pharisees to follow Jesus, would more easily follow Jesus. However, the prospect of shifting their view of righteousness from the law to righteousness by faith in Christ would be a sure loss. For the unrighteous, there is nothing but gain but to those who thought they were righteous it would have been a sure loss. The loss averse of humans can be seen in the deep reluctance of the Pharisees. This insight highlights how much more difficult it can be for church goers steeped in legalism to truly become a disciple of Jesus Christ.

The biblical story highlights the necessity for a shift in System 2 Cognition. While much is made of how System 1 Cognition can lead to less optimal decision making, there is still the possibility of flawed System 2 thinking. Behavioral economics eschews the concept of morality as it is still ultimately focused on individual utility. In the biblical worldview, God is still genuinely concerned with the information that drives our decisions.

A theme in the biblical foundations was the strong link between the knowledge of the Lord and relationship with the Lord. While knowledge of the Lord is a System 2 function, relationships are based on System 1. Understanding this two-system approach can better lead us to understand the disconnect between knowledge and relationships. The Pharisees, despite having an incomplete understanding of God, still had much knowledge of God. Heuristics explains why the Pharisees had separatist tendencies despite God's heart that was open to sinners. This is an archetype of target substitution. Instead of looking at tax collectors and sinners according to God's eyes, the Pharisees substituted the target attribute with the heuristic attribute that they had made.

Behavioral Economics in Historical Foundations

The question looms with the Moravian church movement of how they were so resolute. Why were they so apt in spiritual disciplines? So much so that it even challenged the heart of John Wesley who himself was a man of spiritual discipline. We will take a look at three of the most prominent features of the early Moravian church: 1) prayer, 2) fellowship, and 3) missions through the lens of behavioral economics.

Most of the modern American church cannot even fathom what it means to have a night watch prayer and an hourly prayer that would continue for over one hundred years. The Moravians would have had to make the choice to be a part of this prayer movement and participate in the spiritual discipline of praying. A few behavioral economics concepts can be applied to explain this movement of prayer. First off, the framing effects are prominent. Prayer was not about getting something but about a response to what they have received. Renouncing self-centeredness was central to Zinzendorf's theology. When self-centeredness is renounced, the less there is to lose. There was no risk of loss to the prayer life of the Moravians because they were not praying to reach a certain goal but viewed prayer as a response. Wesley frames prayer in a similar light. It is a means of grace not a means to grace. How we properly frame prayer and the role of prayer has a tremendous impact on how much more willing we will be able to adapt the spiritual discipline of prayer.

There is also the benefit of the outpouring of the Spirit. It is not a coincidence that the prayer meetings were a result of revivals. Revivals play a key role, not just because they are an outpouring of the Spirit but because they make the source of power known.

Source dependence is a trait that decision makers have and the more intimately familiar they are, the more likely they will prefer the situation. We must understand in fairness to many of us who have not experienced revivals, prayer is a much riskier proposition.

In the case of the Moravian movement fellowship became a System 1 Cognition. Any experience of faith was accompanied by food and fellowship. This occurred after the revival known as the Golden Summer. The heuristic of how worship ought to be done was formed from the very beginning as many were encouraged to have food and drink unbothered after the experience of revivals. When the Moravians immigrated to the United States, they went together as a group not because it was more economically advantageous. They did so to be a community in mission together. Fellowship had become imbedded in the lives of the Moravians until it became automatic and effortless. We may find fellowship burdensome. While we understand in our System 2 Cognition that fellowship is necessary, our heuristics are dominated by the individual nature of our culture. While we believe it takes a considerable amount of effort to have fellowship, the historical background of the Moravians seems to suggest that it need not be so deliberate and effortful if the correct heuristics are in place.

Finally, in the realm of mission work in the United States. An emphasis should be put on the Moravians' tendency to be so willing to work with others outside of their group. This is an example of how System 2 Cognition can effectively control System 1 Cognition. The heuristics that ought to have developed should have been separatist tendencies toward different denominations. However, the deliberately controlled decision to work with others with a zeal for Christ enforced the System1 reasoning. The important takeaway from viewing a historical movement through the lens of behavioral economics

is that it we are able to have a framework of hypotheses to show why and how people were able to practice spiritual disciplines in a deeper level.

Behavioral Economics in Theological Foundations

Understanding the two-systems approach gives us more insight into why it was so important for Wesley, Calvin, and Luther to make the distinction between justification and sanctification. The way that information is processed shows why the ordo salutis is so critical for theologians when it comes to distinguishing justification and sanctification. If System 2 Cognition is effortful and deliberately controlled, the question we must ask is to what ends is the effort and control trying to reach. As mentioned before, the decision to follow Jesus as a disciple is a System 2 Cognition. Hence it is important that the System 2 Cognition which reinforces and gives feedback to our System 1 Cognition be accurate. If our System 2 Cognition is filled with the reasoning of works righteousness, our choices from System 1 Cognition will be based on obtaining salvation through works. The catharsis Wesley experienced as he realizes he had done was his own righteousness[35] shows the importance of having the correct System 2 Cognition in place. Wesley put the two-system terms in the most Christian way possible by emphasizing inward and outward holiness. System 2 Cognition was the inward holiness.

Many criticize Wesley's view on Christian perfection because he himself seems to make provisions for mistakes.[36] It seems contradictory but with the framework of two-systems approach in behavioral economics, Wesley's approach makes more sense. This

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[35] Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, 1:100.

[36] Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, 11:395.

sort of framework did not exist in Wesley's time. He attempted to the best of his ability to explain the nuances of Christian perfection. If we were to view Wesley's Christian perfection defined as the perfect alignment of System 2 and System 1 Cognition, his definition makes more sense. There is a limit to human knowledge and hence a limit to how much we can develop our System 2 thinking. However, we can work on our System 1 Cognition to perfectly represent the full extent of what is in our System 2 Cognition. If we were to be using the codec analogy, we could have a lossless codec. It is in this framework where Wesley emphasizes both the need to gain in our knowledge of God's will in our lives – a System 2 Cognition - but also the need to personally developing living out his will – a System 1 Cognition.

We can produce better diagnoses of the lack of discipleship in our congregation when the theology of sanctification is combined with the framework of behavioral economics. The symptom is the lack of spiritual discipline, but the cause of the symptom needs to be diagnosed accurately. The two-systems theory offers a way to see if it is an issue of knowledge or if it is an issue of practice. This adds to our understanding of orthodoxy and orthopraxy. We can first diagnose whether the lack of spiritual discipline is due to imperfect or flawed orthodoxy. Instead of focusing on the more intuitive System 1 works, the focus can first start with having a robust System 2. If the issue is not of orthodoxy but of orthopraxy, the focus should be on minimizing the gap between System 1 and System 2 Cognitions. The minimization of the gap of two systems is fundamentally the process of sanctification.

The deliberate thinking of being a recipient of God's grace through Christ is a System 2 Cognition. A natural outpouring of this is the development of System 1

Cognition. The heuristics will be developed to glorify God in all outward action. Sanctification can be viewed as the constant work to inform our System 1 Cognition so that we would be fast to think of thoughts about Christ and automatically act according to God's will. It would be effortless to do and to be able to associate our works with Christ. The battle becomes less intense as we grow in sanctifying grace. System 1 Cognition is difficult to modify. By applying principles of behavioral economics, we can better troubleshoot our lack of discipleship and have more reasonable goals to become better followers of Christ.

Conclusion

One of the largest roadblocks in ministry is the lack of understanding the link between mind and action. There are parishioners and clergy alike who have much more knowledge than but cannot seem to put their knowledge into action. Seminary students who were called to pastoral ministry would miss Sunday worship because they needed to get an A on their paper. There was a disconnect which is difficult to understand. Ironically, even though it is quite normative to experience a disconnect of knowledge and action, many assume that those who do not practice spiritual disciplines do so because they lack knowledge. Many fall into the trap of using a framework of traditional economic principles and struggled as they see my congregation members make what they think are irrational choices.

Behavioral economics offers a multi-faceted toolkit to see why people do not take on spiritual disciplines, and more importantly, to create a system of discipleship that can accurately assess where the barriers are. Instead of being frustrated on why members

cannot see the increase in utility of following the ways of Christ, the focus can be on the areas of disconnect. The guiding hypotheses of applying behavioral economics principles to the practice of spiritual discipline are 1) the lack of discipline is due to either a flawed System 2 thinking or the disconnect between two systems and 2) in the case of disconnect, theories in behavioral economics can aid to bridge this disconnect. We cannot continue to clamor about the goodness of God and expect works of spiritual discipline. Under these hypotheses, some may either have the wrong idea of God's goodness which does not necessitate a life of spiritual discipline or some may fully understand God's goodness and the imperative to live out his commands but there may be explainable phenomena that keeps them from acting out their beliefs.

Prospect theory shows a framework for leaders and pastors of what is necessary to bridge the gap. Understanding framing effects improves the pedagogical approach. Understanding nonlinear preferences and risk seeking behaviors helps us understand where to set realistic goals. Understanding source dependence further bolsters our need to still teach the concept of discipleship. Loss aversion plays a part in having us understand and be comfortable with judgement language that is used by Jesus.

Bounded rationality - primarily the two-systems approach - becomes an incredible tool to help analyze our current state of discipleship in a more detailed way. Understanding how two systems work separately and together helps us bridge the gap between knowing about discipleship to becoming a disciple.

CHAPTER SIX

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Introduction

The research of Jesus' interaction with the Pharisees while dining at Matthew's house, the Moravian movement, Sanctification Theology and Behavioral Economics led me to lead a discipleship study related to personal discipline in our faith journey. The study was an attempt to address the problem related to the lack of discipleship in the church that has led to an apathetic attitude towards practicing spiritual disciplines regularly. Church attendance, offering, participation in small groups, meditating on the Bible and other spiritual practices were very inconsistent among some of the church members and even leaders. If members of the church were to participate in a study related to the relationship between discipline and discipleship, then they would be better equipped to apply discipline in their Christian discipleship. The study was designed to address the first step by bringing about an affective change towards spiritual disciplines in discipleship.

In my personal struggle with maintaining and adapting spiritual disciplines, I have found that having the correct understanding and attitude related to discipline was a key factor in exercising discipline. The reason for adapting disciplines was just as important as the discipline itself. There needed to be a change in mindset. Also, I realized that giving up something was necessary to get from a change of mind to consistent action. I

believed that the study may help those who wrestle with three different issues with the lack of discipleship. Those who focus only on discipline fail to understand the reason for adopting spiritual disciplines in discipleship. This would be considered those who fall into the category of legalism. While legalistic tendencies may seem like they lend themselves well to a life of discipline, it is different in practice. Many who are legalistic tend to show discipline in only the areas they want rather than adapting other fundamental disciplines in practice. Parishioners may have a staunch stance on issues of homosexuality but may have a more laxed view of corporate worship on the sabbath. The second is those who focus only on grace and fail to understand the need for discipline. There are those who believe that there is no need for discipline because we are saved by grace. This would be considered in the category of antinomianism. Some parishioners have asked the question of why living a holy life matters when Christ died for our sins anyway. Finally, there are those who understand grace and the need for discipline but do may have difficulty adopting spiritual disciplines. This would be considered in the category of immature faith. There may be a disconnect in the application of discipline. They may have failed to understand the mechanism behind a disciplined life. Mainly that something must be sacrificed in order to adopt something new. By creating a class that shows not just the need for discipline but the correct framework of discipline in discipleship, parishioners may be able to have a better roadmap to understanding how to implement spiritual disciplines.

A class was created to help members of the church better understand the dynamics of grace and discipline in discipleship. The assumption of creating this study was that there was a disconnect between grace and discipline and the study was designed

to bridge the gap. I expected the parishioners who were successful in understanding the role of grace and the need of discipline in discipleship will have a change in perspective in how they view discipline. Those who want to mature in their faith and go further in their discipleship journey will be able to set up more realistic goals that will lead to consistent growth.

Methodology

A class was designed to be held for six weeks with a 90-minute class and discussion once every week. The classes in the beginning and the last were designed to help with understanding the concepts and a debrief. The first module allowed participants to get ready for the project and is in place to introduce the concept of focused journaling. It gave the participants an opportunity to discuss and share their thoughts in hopes that they will get used to the atmosphere of the study. The final module dealt with debriefing and making sure the subjects were able to get proper pastoral care should they decide they needed it. The four modules in the middle focused on teaching the concepts of discipline and discipleship through the Bible, theological framework, history, and a secular framework.

A class setting was chosen because, due to the varying subject matter, it was not necessarily a study of God's word. Conducting this class a Bible study would be misleading since there were classes that emphasized events or theories outside of scripture. Also, the content dealing in scripture would be topical in nature and may have caused confusion with some members who were used to the mostly expository preaching that was heard on Sunday mornings.

A class setting would be ideal to introduce certain concepts that would not be dealt with in a typical Sunday worship service and sermon. As there was an issue of consistent participation in Bible Studies in my context, a conscious effort was made to formalize the study in order to build more interest and participation.

The project relied on pre- and post-project surveys, focused individual interviews, and focused journaling. The pre and post project surveys and questions were designed to see if there would be an affective change in the way that discipline was viewed. 5-point Likert scale questions were asked in the pre and post project surveys. One portion of the survey questions was designed to reflect the beliefs and attitudes towards discipline and grace pertaining to discipleship. The participants could choose within a scale from 'always' to 'never.' These questions were:

1. How important do you think discipline is related to your salvation?
2. Do you feel burdened to be more disciplined in your spiritual life?
3. How likely would you encourage other members of the church to adopt personal discipline in their faith life?
4. How likely would you encourage those close to you to adopt personal discipline in personal life outside of church?

Another set of 5-point Likert scale questions were asked based on the participants view of the following statements. The participants could choose from 'Agree strongly' to 'Disagree strongly.' The statements were:

5. I am more disciplined than others in life.
6. Discipline does not matter because I am saved by God's grace.
7. People without discipline in their spiritual life are not saved.

8. People without discipline in their spiritual life are not disciples of Jesus.

The same set of questions were used for the pre- and post-project surveys. In addition, two questions were asked to give participants an opportunity to share more thoughts and experiences of discipline in their spiritual journey. The questions were as follows:

1) Have you had a bad experience with someone trying to make you adopt discipline in your faith life? If yes, please elaborate.
2) Have you had a bad experience with someone trying to make you adopt discipline in your personal life outside of church? If yes, please elaborate.

The post-project survey modified the two questions above to see if there was a shift in perspective. The questions were:

1) Has your view of the bad experience with someone trying to make you adopt discipline in your faith life changed? If yes, please elaborate.
2) Has your view of a bad experience with someone trying to make you adopt a discipline in your personal life outside of church changed? If yes, please elaborate.

Finally, in the pre-project survey some general questions related to spiritual disciplines were given to find a baseline of how many spiritual disciplines or practices they were practicing. Five areas of spiritual discipline were given. The purpose was twofold. It was designed to see which spiritual disciplines the participants were practicing but also had the intent of showing and defining what spiritual disciplines were available

to adopt. 5-point Likert scale questions were asked, and participants chose within a scale from ‘always’ to ‘never.’ These questions were:

1. Prayer Life

    I pray daily.

    I spend intentional, focused time in prayer.

    I pray for others regularly.

    I feel that I need to be more consistent in my prayer life.

2. Scripture Engagement

    I read the Bible regularly.

    I reflect on and apply Scripture to my life.

    I memorize Scripture.

    I feel that I need to be more consistent engaging God’s word.

3. Worship and Community

    I attend corporate worship services.

    I participate in a small group or Bible study.

    I encourage and serve others in my faith community.

    I feel that I need to be more consistent in attending church.

4. Fasting and Solitude

    I practice fasting as a spiritual discipline.

    I set aside time for solitude and silence with God.

    I feel that I need to be more consistent in fasting.

    I feel that I need to be more consistent in having time of solitude.

5. Stewardship and Service

I give financially to support my church or other ministries.

I use my time and talents to serve others.

I feel that I need to be more consistent in giving an offering to God.

I feel that I need to offer (offerings and tithes) more to God.

I feel that I need to be more consistent in serving others.

Finally, a set of reflection questions were given in the pre-project survey. This was to give an opportunity for participants to reflect on their spiritual discipline and to elaborate on any thoughts or feelings. The final question was designed to see if spiritual discipline was linked to general discipline. The questions were:

1. Which spiritual discipline do you feel strongest in?
2. Which spiritual discipline would you like to grow in?
3. Have you failed in disciplining yourself to achieve a specific goal (weight loss, finances, stronger faith life) before? Please elaborate.

While focused individual interviews were planned, it was apparent that asking for more than 90 minutes from the participants was very difficult. Instead, data from the discussion. These questions were used to see if the participants were able to understand the concepts of the lesson. The purpose was to see the relationship between the change in knowledge and the relationship between affective change. The running hypothesis was that the more participants knew, the more there would be a change in affect. Here were some sample group discussion questions:

Do you think you can explain justification (justifying grace) now?

Do you think you can explain sanctification (sanctifying grace) now?

Why do you think all the reformers always talked about justification before talking about sanctification?

There was also time for focused journaling at the end of each session. Focused journaling was done with guiding questions to write in the journal entries. Every journal entry started out with a space to elaborate more on the discussion questions discussed in the class. The participants had the option of finishing the journaling after the class or to take it home and hand it in within a week. The questions were more personal and private to see how the participants processed the information they were given and to gain data points related to where they started in their faith journey and their views of spiritual disciplines in discipleship. A sample journal entry prompt is given below.

1. Where do you feel like you are on your faith journey? Are you in the midst of experiencing justifying grace or sanctifying grace? Why do you think so?

There is a need for deep processing that is necessary in discipleship. While some time will be given during the module, my hope is that the participants will be able to add to their thoughts as time progresses. While the group discussions can serve as reactionary data, the journaling can provide a look into whether contemplating a specific subject can lead to a different affective change. One of the purposes of implementing journalling within one's timeframe and pace was to give a feedback mechanism for the longer lasting thoughts and responses instead of a rapid unidirectional information stream.

Implementation

This class offered a total of six classes with four modules based on teaching and the two modules based on reflection. The classes were held during Wednesday evenings

from September 17 to October 22, 2025. The participants were invited to join through announcements, and individual asks. Potential participants who expressed interest in taking the class were given an information packet related to the details of the class and the informed consent letter. Although participants were asked to commit to all six sessions, some participants had to miss some of the classes due to scheduling conflicts. The classes were held in person as well as offering a video conferencing option to be done simultaneously while holding the class in the church meeting room. Presentation software as well as handouts were given to the participants. The participants had an option to journal and fill out their surveys online or in person on paper.

The first class was designed to help understand the nature of the study and to introduce the terms that would be used for the class. Legalism and antinomianism are not terms that are used regularly in the local church setting. It was imperative that these concepts were introduced to help the participants reflect on where they stood in their spiritual life. Also, the word 'discipline' could have many meanings. Often, discipline has a negative connotation. It was important to define the scope of the word 'discipline' to be limited to the practice of spiritual works or the ability to regulate oneself to be consistent in practices that one may desire. In order to gain reliable data, it was imperative to define the main terms used within the study.

The purpose and stated goal of the class was for the participants to 1) personally and honestly reflect on their personal discipline related to discipleship, 2) understand the terms and meanings of discipline, discipleship, Spiritual disciplines, Personal Discipline, 3) understand the process of this study and its potential positive and negative impacts and

to have signed their informed consent form and 4) familiarize themselves with what methods are available to record their thoughts.

After explaining the process and consent forms, a brief lecture was given to explain the terms that would be used throughout the class. Time was given to take pre-project surveys. Afterwards, personal stories and journeys related to discipleship and discipline were shared with the group. More time was given for the participants to share their thoughts. The original plan was to have journaling done within the classroom setting, but participants shared the need to process things more. Hence, the option to finish the journaling in the classroom or finish the journaling at home was given. The participants could leave their results on the pastor's confidential mailbox or finish the survey via Google Forms using the link that was provided in the debrief email sent out weekly.

The second class, titled "The Foundation of Discipleship," marked the start of the more lecture heavy portion of the class. The goals in the class were for the participants to 1) understand the basic concept of the Hebrew word "*Hesed*" (חֶסֶד), 2) reflect on *hesed* and the importance of discipleship, and 3) reflect on why understanding *hesed* effects my personal discipline. After a fifty-minute lecture of the material based on the biblical foundations chapter, the group started a discussion and time of reflection related to their personal experiences, or lack thereof, of *hesed*. Most of the participants had never heard of the word '*hesed*' before in the church. Some more time was necessary to explain the concept of *hesed* and how it was related to God's love in a biblical perspective. Journaling time was given after the class.

The third class was titled "The Framework of Discipleship." The lesson goals were for the participants to 1) understand what the protestant reformers and John Wesley

had to say about personal discipline in discipleship, 2) reflect on the major themes of discipleship and how they are related to personal spiritual disciplines and 3) reflect on whether the reformers and Wesley thought discipline was integral to discipleship. A fifty-minute lecture on Sanctification theology was given. Unlike many academic circles or some theological ones, the participants had never heard of or cared for the theological distinctives between, Calvin, Luther, and Wesley. The interaction between discipline and grace was emphasized in this class. During this class, a learning moment occurred and shifted how the lectures would be approached. Another hypothesis was that it always had to be an experience of grace, or *hesed*, that preceded discipline. However, the participants highlighted that discipline could lead to a greater experience of God's grace. This was solidified during our time of discussion.

The fourth session was a case study on how personal discipline was implemented into discipleship. The class was about the Moravian movement with the goals of letting the participants 1)understand the relationship between spiritual and personal discipline and the movement of the Holy Spirit, 2) understand the relationship between *hesed* and discipline that played out in the Moravian church movement, and 3) reflect on the difference between local churches now and the Moravian church movement. Many church members may not find relevance in past church movements and revivals. An element that is often missed is the presence of strong discipline among the group members. The lesson was designed to emphasize the presence of discipline in the midst of God's grace. The same pattern of group discussion, reflection and time for journaling was given afterward.

The fifth session was the final lecture-heavy class. This session dealt with the practical approach to discipline and discipleship by using the framework of behavioral economics to explain the relationship between willingness and discipleship. The main objectives of the session were for the participants to 1) understand why we do the things we do even though we want to do something different, 2) reflect on how a complete biblical understanding is important to applying discipline in discipleship and 3) reflect whether this framework of Behavioral Economics is applicable to their daily life. The goal was to see whether spiritual disciplines and practical disciplines overlapped. An assumption was that many who lack the ability for personal discipline or may have had an adverse experience may not be likely to adopt spiritual disciplines. The goal was to see if this could be the case based on reflection and discussion questions. Time for journaling was given after the discussion.

The final session served as a debrief and final reflection time. The goal was for the participants to ask the pastor any questions that they may have and have a moment to reflect and share their honest thoughts with those who participated in the study and the pastor. The participants had time to discuss the potential next steps. The post-project survey was given to end the session.

Summary of learning

The project was designed to address the issue of the lack of discipline in discipleship at the local church. This section will deal with two learnings. First, are the overall learning and support of the hypothesis. The second is what the participants and I learned throughout the lessons. One of the issues that came up right away was that those

who were not engaged in the life of the church other than the areas where they wanted to be did not show much interest in the class. Many of the members who were regular attenders of worship and would be considered consistent in their presence were the members who signed up for the class. As new members and new attendees became a part of the context, the context changed. While there were still the members of the past who continued to attend sparingly, those who participated in the study were parishioners who started getting involved after the surveying of the context was initially done or parishioners who were mostly consistent in attending seasonal bible studies and worship services. In the pre-project survey, all the participants had answered that they attend Sunday worship service at least bi-weekly with the majority of the participants stating that they attend weekly. I had originally hoped for some members who do not attend regularly to be a part of the project.

This led me to believe that there can be much more fundamental issues when it comes to the lack of discipline in discipleship. It can be a possibility that many are content in their spiritual life and do not feel the need to do anything different. It may be that the way the gospel was presented had more to do with how we feel about our relationship than what we actually do about our relationship with God. I have heard a lot more in this context many people calling others or themselves "good Christians." It may be possible that discipline was never tied to how some define their relationship and status as a disciple of Jesus.

However, the issue of understanding the role of discipline in discipleship remained and was still relevant for the study. There were also noticeable areas in which the participants did not adopt spiritual disciplines. Fasting and solitude stood out as

spiritual disciplines that were not widely adopted. Half of the participants did not practice the discipline of fasting while over half of the participants answered that they only set time aside for solitude and silence sometimes or rarely. Some participants shared that they had never heard of fasting as a spiritual discipline before. Another area was reflecting and applying Scripture and memorizing scripture. The majority answered that they reflect on and memorize scripture sometimes. The area of engagement with Scripture was one that they felt they needed to feel more consistent in. Five out of the eight participants stated that they felt a need to be more consistent in engaging God's word.

The hypothesis that if members participated in this class about the relationship between discipline and discipleship, then they will change their views and attitudes of discipline related to Christian discipleship. The pre- and post-project survey supports this view. None of the participants thought that discipline was unrelated to salvation. In the answer to the question related to how important discipline is related to salvation two participants answered 'sometimes,' four answered 'often,' and two answered 'always." In the post-project survey three answered 'often' and four answered 'always.' Although one participant was not able to participate in the last session and could not submit their post-project survey, the direction in which the participants viewed the relationship of discipline in the life of someone who was "saved" had changed to take discipline more seriously.

The beauty of the study was that it was designed to address the issue of legalism as well. One of the concerns of having a class with the emphasis of discipline was that it may turn into a class that leads to more legalism. The point of the class was that

participants needed a healthy view of discipline in discipleship. A stronger understanding of God's grace was part of the purpose of the study as well. Participants were asked to answer the question "do you feel burdened to be more disciplined in your spiritual life?" on a Likert scale. Three participants selected 'sometimes,' three selected 'often' and one selected 'always.' In the post-project survey, four answered 'sometimes' and two answered 'often.' The results indicated a shift to the middle when it comes to being burdened by discipline. In the question "How likely would you encourage those close to you to adopt personal discipline in personal life outside of church?" two people answered 'rarely' in the pre-project survey while none answered 'rarely' in the post-project survey. There was a positive affective change in the way that discipline was viewed.

The most helpful framework in the class was given through sharing "Figure 1. The Four Outcomes of Discipleship" that is in the Synergy chapter. While participants could not name their experiences as "legalism" or "antinomianism," they shared some insights related to legalistic tendencies. A participant shared their experience in the church and just attending without really understanding why. Another shared the about the potential burden that legalistic tendencies could have. In the same light, some participants thought that antinomianism would be an issue as well. A participant mentioned how church goers can be in church without really doing much. The framework of the Four Outcomes of Discipleship gave participants a starting point for reflection and understanding how both discipline and understanding God's *hesed* was important. This framework continued to develop within the participants as the classes continued.

The second class was regarding understanding God's mercy as the foundation of discipleship. One of the journal entry questions asked was if the participants had heard of

the concept of *hesed* and experienced it personally. The majority of the participants wrote and shared that they had never heard of the word before. However, when it was explained in concept, some mentioned that it was taught to them. All agreed that *hesed* is an important concept and some mentioned that it is the center of our relationship with God. What surprised me was how the participants experienced *hesed* in their lives personally. The question asked was "Have you experienced God's *hesed* through Christ personally?" Many of the answers were deeply personal answers in everyday moments. One participant wrote about having children as an experience of God's grace. Another wrote about a comfort that God gave during a trying time. Some of the entries would seem far away from how the Israelites experienced God's *hesed* but at the same time, it reminded me that God's mercy through Christ is to be experienced through ordinary means. Some participants confessed that they had to process a lot of what *hesed* meant before they were able to write about their experience of *hesed*. This highlighted the importance of personal reflection and reflection of scripture when understanding God's *hesed* and how it can impact our discipline in discipleship.

The third class was understanding the reformers and Wesley's view on sanctification as the framework of discipleship. The distinction between justifying grace and sanctifying grace was explained through the lens of the reformers and Wesley. The analogy used in understanding if we are truly experiencing God's sanctifying grace in the class was a good parent and a bad parent. When we have good parents, we want to please our parents. When we have bad parents, we are afraid of the consequences if we do not live up to their standards. A theme that arose from teaching about the distinction was the idea of Christian maturation. It occurred to me that when there is no distinction between

receiving God's *hesed* and being disciplined the maturation process can be hampered. A participant wrote that they had considered themselves in sanctifying grace but realized that the works they were doing were to be considered a good Christian rather than a response to God's mercy. Another participant wrote that they considered themselves a teenager in faith. Sanctification theology gave the participants a framework into understanding whether they were on the right path of discipleship. The class that gave a framework of understanding how God's *hesed* plays out in our spiritual disciplines, further bolstering the idea that part of teaching how to be disciples is to teach a framework of what Christian maturation looks like in terms of both understanding God's mercy (*hesed*) and discipline.

The fourth session looked at the spiritual disciplines and how they played a role in a movement of the Holy Spirit within the Moravian church. It is during this time when I realized that I may have had the wrong assumption going into this project. I sought to teach and prove that understanding God's mercy (*hesed*) was the starting point of discipleship. However, as the participants shared their stories, I realized that God's mercy is shown through our attempts at adopting spiritual disciplines even if one is motivated for the wrong reasons. It is not the starting point that matters but that disciples of Jesus understand both the need of God's mercy and discipline in their lives. A point of emphasis in the lecture was the accountability structure that encouraged spiritual disciplines. When asked about experiences of accountability structures of discipline, the responses varied. Some said that it was helpful. Others mentioned that there were no accountability structures in the church. Another mentioned that they were a part of a church that just focused on the action without the room for questioning and that type of

environment had made them go further away from the church. The general view was that accountability structures are needed to help people grow in their faith but the need for understanding God's mercy was highlighted in the responses as well. Someone asked how someone could reach out to a broken soul when there is only an accountability structure. This highlighted the importance of understanding God's mercy. The issue with discipline is not the disciplines themselves. All participants felt the need to grow in that area. The issue was whether the church was able to give them enough time to process God's mercy and the meaning of doing the things that they were encouraged to do.

The final lecture was related to the practical approach to discipline and discipleship. One of the interesting points that was mentioned in our time of discussion was the "participation trophy" concept. A participant mentioned that this type of attitude may encourage antinomian tendencies. They mentioned that the same could be said for a person with legalistic tendencies as they might just "check the box" without looking at the things this person was lacking. The fact that there can be environments where there is no perceived loss can lead to a lack of discipleship. This widened the idea of discipline into not only self-discipline but the need of someone who will discipline. Another participant mentioned that the way we try harder is important. In this sense this class was successful in highlighting the multi-dimensional aspects of discipleship.

Conclusion

I was surprised at the results. I did not expect there to be an affective change to the extent that I was able to see. In one sense, the project did not work as originally intended to help those who were not present in the life of the church consistently. The

parishioners who were inconsistent in practicing spiritual disciplines showed no interest in the project. In another sense, it did prove the problem statement and hypothesis. The study helped define what the lack of discipleship meant. I was challenged to further study was how the gospel and discipleship is presented to the congregation. When did actions of following Christ become something that is defined individually rather than from the early practices of followers of the way that is seen in scripture? It also proved that a class on the relationship between discipleship and discipline can lead to a change in affect towards adopting more spiritual disciplines and growing as disciples.

It is easy to view discipleship in a one-dimensional way. Some may think that being a disciple of Jesus means that we are deeply indebted to Christ because of his work on the cross. We may feel the presence of Christ through thinking about God's *hesed* shown through Christ. However, there may be little change in one's life. On the opposite end of the spectrum, some may view discipleship as purely action. There can be pastors or churches who look at attendance metrics in worship and bible studies and think that discipleship is taking place. The project showed that the walls we may be facing in helping our parishioners grow as disciples of Christ may be due to the one-dimensional approach we take. Mercy begets works and works begets the need for mercy. As we grow as disciples of Christ mercy informs us of the reason for works and works informs us of the need for God's mercy. This is what Paul means in Romans 8:15, "The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." In one sense, viewing the relationship between discipline and understanding God's mercy linearly was missing the point as well. This was an assumption I made at the start of the

project. I have now realized that the relationship is not linear but circular in nature. Discipleship is 'z axis' to discipline that is the 'x axis' and understanding mercy as the 'y axis.' Discipleship when graphed would look more like a three-dimensional spiral than a two-dimensional line.

I had originally thought that the lack of discipleship meant the lack of actions and discipline in the members of the church. I now realize that very disciplined members can also lack discipleship. The study has allowed me to take a much bolder stance in encouraging members to adopt spiritual disciplines to become disciples because I have realized that a disciplined faith and life, regardless of whether we are succeeding or failing, leads to a deeper understanding of God's lovingkindness. Even when members were confident in some of their spiritual disciplines, the answers suggested a feeling that they need to be more consistent in other areas. There is always room for God's mercy to take shape in our shortcomings. I was surprised at the number of participants who explicitly mentioned the need to set time for solitude and silence with God. This is a yearning for some to be able to reflect and see how God's mercy is taking shape in their lives.

The class on the relationship between discipline and discipleship worked because it introduced how God's mercy can take shape through discipline. It worked because there was ample time and intentionally in reflecting on self and on God. The participants were inadvertently challenged because spiritual disciplines were defined. As a pastor, I realized how little time I spent on defining and pointing out spiritual disciplines. I expected parishioners to be more disciplined without defining what being disciplined looks like biblically. It is easy to assume that parishioners know what to do. Giving

participants an opportunity to reflect and think about how they put their faith in action was a key element in changing their views on discipline. However, without the backdrop of God's grace, it would have just been a burden.

One of the things that I would do differently would be to have more time for reflection. Although this was limited to six weeks, I believe that discipleship programs in the church would be longer and much more personal. The participants had much deeper personal thinking than they let on in prior bible studies or conversations once they were given the opportunity to journal. Every sermon series comes and goes so quickly in the modern ministry landscape and not much time is given for participants to have a time of deep reflection together as the body of Christ. This project has taught me and made me grow into a pastor who will have a multi-faceted approach to disciple making to encourage members of the church to take once step closer to Christ or to take one step with him.

APPENDIX A

PRE- AND POST-PROJECT SURVEY RESPONSES

1. Pre- and Post-Project Survey Results with same question

How important do you think discipline is related to your salvation?

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	No Response
Pre-Project	2	5	1			
Post-Project	4	3				1

Do you feel burdened to be more disciplined in your spiritual life?

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	No Response
Pre-Project	1	3	3	1		
Post-Project		2	4	1		1

How likely would you encourage other members of the church to adopt personal discipline in their faith life?

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	No Response
Pre-Project		2	4	2		
Post-Project		3	1	3		1

How likely would you encourage those close to you to adopt personal discipline in personal life outside of church?

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	No Response
Pre-Project	1	3	2	2		
Post-Project	1	3	3			1

I am more disciplined than others in life

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree Strongly	No Response
Pre-Project		3	2	3		
Post-Project		3	3	1		1

discipline does not matter because I am saved by God's grace.

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree Strongly	No Response
Pre-Project		1	1	4	2	
Post-Project				6	1	1

people without discipline in their spiritual life are not saved.

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree Strongly	No Response
Pre-Project		1		5	2	
Post-Project			2	5		1

2. Pre- and Post-Project Survey Questions with slightly different wording

Have you had a bad experience with someone trying to make you adapt discipline in your faith life?

yes	no	maybe
2	6	

Has your view of the bad experience with someone trying to make you adopt discipline in your faith life changed?

yes	no	maybe
4	2	1

Have you had a bad experience with someone trying to make you adopt discipline in your personal life outside of church?

yes	no	maybe
4	3	1

Has your view of a bad experience with someone trying to make you adopt a discipline in your personal life outside of church changed?

yes	no	maybe
1	3	3

*One participant did not fill out post-project survey

3. Pre-Project Survey questions related to Spiritual Disciplines

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	No Response
I pray daily.	7				1	
I spend intentional, focused time in prayer.	2	3	3			
I pray for others regularly.	2	6				
I feel that I need to be more consistent in my prayer life.	5		3			
I read the Bible regularly.	1	4	2	1		
I reflect on and apply Scripture to my life.	0	2	5	1		
I memorize Scripture.	0		4	3	1	
I feel that I need to be more consistent engaging God's word.	5	2	1			
I attend corporate worship services.	5	3				
I participate in a small group or Bible study.	2	3	1	2		
I encourage and serve others in my faith community.	1	2	4	1		
I feel that I need to be more consistent in attending church.	2			4	2	
I practice fasting as a spiritual discipline.	0	3		2	2	1
I set aside time for solitude and silence with God.	0	2	3	3		
I feel that I need to be more consistent in fasting.	2	1	1	3	1	
I feel that I need to be more consistent in having time of solitude.	2	4	1	1		
I give financially to support my church or other ministries.	6	1	1			
I use my time and talents to serve others.	2	4	2			
I feel that I need to be more consistent in giving an offering to God			2	3		1
I feel that I need to offer (offerings and tithes) more to God.		2	1	3		2
I feel that I need to be more consistent in serving others.	1	3	4			

APPENDIX B

FOCUSED JOURNALING QUESTIONS

Identifier (my favorite color and memorable 2 digits)_____

Focused journaling - *Week 1*
Here are the questions mentioned during our session. If you would like to write about them in more detail or if there was anything you would like to add please let me know.
What are your thoughts about discipline?
Would you like to share some of your experiences with discipline?
Why is legalism a problem? Or is it a problem?
Why is not taking discipline seriously a problem? Or is it a problem?

Think about your journey in life. Do you have any regrets of not having enough discipline? Do you think you were too disciplined? Please elaborate.

If your pastor told you that you were not a Christian because you did not come to church, how would you feel about it?

Identifier (my favorite color and memorable 2 digits)_____
Focused journaling - *Week 2*
Here are the questions mentioned during our session. If you would like to write about them in more detail or if there was anything you would like to add please let me know.
Have you ever heard of the concept of hesed before?
Do you think this is an important concept?

Have you experienced something similar to hesed?

Have you experienced God's hesed through Christ personally? Please elaborate.

Identifier (my favorite color and memorable 2 digits)_____

Focused journaling - *Week 3*
Here are the questions mentioned during our session. If you would like to write about them in more detail or if there was anything you would like to add please let me know.
Do you think you can explain justification (justifying grace) now?
Do you think you can explain sanctification (sanctifying grace) now?
Why do you think all the reformers always talked about justification before talking about sanctification?

Where do you feel like you are on your faith journey? Are you in the midst of experiencing justifying grace or sanctifying grace? Why do you think so?

Identifier (my favorite color and memorable 2 digits)_____
Focused journaling - *Week 4*
Here are the questions mentioned during our session. If you would like to write about them in more detail or if there was anything you would like to add please let me know.
Do you think a movement like the Moravian church can happen in our church? Why?

Have you ever been encouraged (or held accountable) like the Moravians were in church?

If so, did it help you in your faith journey?

If not, do you think this is a problem?

Identifier (my favorite color and memorable 2 digits)_____

Focused journaling - *Week 5*
Here are the questions mentioned during our session. If you would like to write about them in more detail or if there was anything you would like to add please let me know.
What do you think of the phrase "just try harder?"

What are some resolutions or goals that required discipline you failed in? Why do you think you failed?

What are some resolutions or goals that required discipline you succeeded in? Why do you think you succeeded?

APPENDIX C

LESSON SLIDES

The Application of Personal Discipline in Discipleship in the Local Church

Study by Jonathan Kim Doctor of Ministry Candidate

1

In this sessions we will

- Go over process and sign consent forms
- Go over terms used in the study
- Fill out pre-study survey
- Share my personal story on discipline and discipleship
- Give participants time to ask questions and share or process their thoughts together
- Fill out journal entry on thoughts related to discipline and discipleship

2

Process

- 6 week course
- 90 minutes + Journal entry time
- Lesson, group discussion and journal entry (reflecting on questions asked)
- Need for code name

3

Terms

- Discipleship – following what Jesus did
- Legalism – dependence on following rules for salvation rather than faith in Christ
- Antinomianism (Anti-rules) – not following any rules because I am already saved
- Discipline
  - A discipline – specific behavior that is done regularly and intentionally
  - Self-discipline – the ability of self to do said specific behavior
  - Being disciplined by someone – training someone to do said specific behavior through punishment or other undesired consqeunces

4

Terms

- Spiritual disciplines
  - Prayer
  - Engaging with the word of God
  - Engaging God with community
  - Fasting and Solitude
  - Stewardship and Service
- Personal disciplines – Finances, time management, health, self-improvement
- Regiment – a pattern that allows for self-discipline

5

Terms – continued

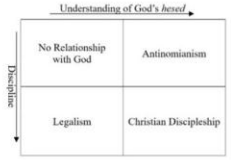
- Grace – unmerited divine favor to have a recovered relationship with God
- Spiritual life – the deep connection to the sacred

6

Fill out survey

7

Personal story



8

Questions

- What are your thoughts about discipline?
- Would you like to share some of your experiences with discipline?
- Why is legalism a problem? Or is it a problem?
- Why is not taking discipline seriously a problem? Or is it a problem?

9

Journal Entry

10

The Start of Discipleship

Study by Jonathan Kim Doctor of Ministry Candidate to research the Application of Personal Discipline in Discipleship in the Local Church

1

In this sessions we will

- Study Matthew 9:9-13
- Learn about the Pharisees
- Learn about sinners and tax collectors
- Learn about Hesed
- The relationship between God's love and discipline in discipleship

2

Meet Sally

- Annual salary is $100K
- She is the CEO of Hope Company.
- She works hard to change the legislature to reflect her beliefs.
- Part of the Board of Directors in the Children's Emergency Fund
- Leadership Council Chair at Vision Church (around 20,000 people attend it)
- Teaches a bible study

3

Sally

- Tithes regularly generally giving around $10,000 yearly to her church
- She is considered to be a crucial member of her board
- Many members of her church applaud her for the stance she takes on some political issues
- Comes to church every single Sunday no matter what
- Memorizes bible verses and could quote most of them
- Younger women in her community and church aspire to be like her and seek her mentorship

4

Meet Pheonix

- Annual salary is $4.8M
- CEO of a real estate company.
- Has a main downtown penthouse for work, a beachfront property and multiple investment properties
- She is a "member" of Vision Church as well.

5

Pheonix

- gives around $100,000 dollars every year to the church, $50K for Christmas and $50K for Easter
- Has a business model based on buying rental properties of underprivileged areas, slowly increasing the rent until the tenants move out. She remodels them to become luxury apartments
- didn't attend church much because many of the people that were kicked out of her developments attend the church
- met Jesus personally one Easter service and starts coming to church more often.

6

Who is more Christian?

- Jesus says "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock." (Mt 7:24)
- James writes "What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them?" (Ja 2:14)
- Sally or Pheonix?

7

When asked about why they come to church

- Sally says that this is what she has done with her family since she was born and was instilled with Christian values. She enjoys being in church so much.
- Pheonix breaks down in tears and says she regrets her life and business model, she still doesn't know what to do with it, but she knows she cannot say no to Jesus.

8

Who is more Christian?

- Sally or Pheonix?

9

Who looks more like a disciple of Jesus?

- Sally or Pheonix?

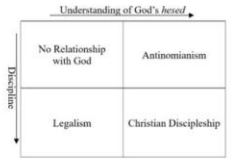
10

Who is a disciple of Jesus?

- Sally or Pheonix?

11

Christian Discipleship



12

Matthew 9:9-13

9 As Jesus was passing by from there, he saw a man named Matthew who was sitting at the tax booth. Then he said to him "Follow me." After getting up, he followed him. 10 Afterward, while Jesus was dining in the house, behold many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. 11 Having seen (what was going on), the Pharisees said to his disciples "why does your teacher eat with the tax collectors and sinners?" 12 However, having heard (what they said), he said it is not those who are healthy that have a need for a physician but those who are sick. 13 but go and experience what this is "Mercy I desire, not sacrifice." For I did not come to call the righteous but sinners.

13

Matthew 9:9-13

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14

The Tax Collectors

- Roman governance that led to animosity with Pharisees and Jews. (Tax collectors were a part of the Roman governance, Pharisees were part of the Jewish governance allowed by the Romans)
- Hired to exploit knowledge of their own people
- Natural violators of the Mosaic law

15

The Sinners

- Used in the context of those who ought to know God but do not know God.
- Only mentioned once to be used outside the context of Jews (not as a noun but as an adjective – sinful Gentiles)
- Sinners are those within the covenant community not for those who are outside!
- The context is to bring back people into the covenant community

16

Matthew 9:9-13

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17

The Pharisees

- The name Pharisee comes from the Hebrew word פרוש(parush), which means separatist.
- Had political clout
- From the masses – a group from the people for the people
- The purpose of Jesus' dining with them was for them to rethink the covenant relationship

18

Mercy I desire, not sacrifice...

- Galatians 3:21-25
  - Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. 22 But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. 23 But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. 24 Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25 But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.
- Nobody can follow the law fully
- The law shows that we need Christ

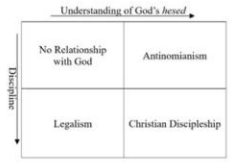
25

Mercy I desire, not sacrifice...

- Following the law => Righteousness (Old way)
- Following the law => Relationship with God (Intention)
- Failure to follow the law => Need for Jesus => Receive Grace => Follow the law for a relationship with God (New way)

26

Christian Discipleship



27

Break (10 min)

28

Questions

- Have you ever heard of the concept of hesed before?
  - Other words used to translate hesed are
    - steadfast love, lovingkindness, mercy, kindness, loyalty/faithfulness, faithful love, devotion, goodness
- Do you think this is an important concept?

29

Journal Entry

30

The Healthy vs. Sick

- The specific word used for healthy suggests – those who are in control or have the requisite personal resources to accomplish
- Those who think they have the personal resources to accomplish do not need a physician
- It is only those who know that they do not have the resources that need a physician

19

Matthew 9:9-13

9 As Jesus was passing by from there, he saw a man named Matthew who was sitting at the tax booth. Then he said to him "Follow me." After getting up, he followed him. 10 Afterward, while Jesus was dining in the house, behold many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. 11 Having seen (what was going on), the Pharisees said to his disciples "why does your teacher eat with the tax collectors and sinners?" 12 However, having heard (what they said), he said it is not those who are healthy that have a need for a physician but those who are sick. 13 but go and experience what this is "Mercy I desire, not sacrifice."For I did not come to call the righteous but sinners.

20

but go and experience/know (μάθετε)...

- Μάθετε (Mathete) is translated to learn but it means more about learning through experience.
- Μαθητής (Mathetes) means disciple
- The Hebrew word for it is יָדַע (yada)
- The theme of knowing God is mentioned throughout the Old Testament – knowing about someone vs. knowing someone
- 13 but go and μάθετε/יָדַע what this is "Mercy I desire, not sacrifice."

21

but go and experience/know (μάθετε)...

- Jesus says to experiencing God who desires mercy
  - Knowing Mercy = Knowing God
- Jesus says to experience God who does not desire sacrifice
  - Knowing sacrifice ≠ Knowing God
- Jesus says to mercy is of more importance than sacrifice
  - He does not say that sacrifice is not important
  - Mt 5:17 – I did not come to abolish the law but fulfill it
  - You don't understand sacrifice without understanding mercy

22

Mercy I desire, not sacrifice...

- Quote from Hosea 6:6
  - For I desire steadfast love (hesed) and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.
- One of the main themes of Hosea is knowing God.
  - 2:8 - She has not acknowledged that I was the one who gave her the grain, the new wine and oil, who lavished on her the silver and gold— which they used for Baal.
  - 6:3 - Let us acknowledge the LORD; let us press on to acknowledge him. As surely as the sun rises, he will appear; he will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth."
  - 11:3 - It was I who taught Ephraim to walk, taking them by the arms; but they did not realize it was I who healed them.
  - 13:4 - "But I have been the LORD your God ever since you came out of Egypt. You shall acknowledge no God but me, no Savior except me.
  - 14:9 - Who is wise? Let them realize these things. Who is discerning? Let them understand. The ways of the LORD are right; the righteous walk in them, but the rebellious stumble in them.

23

Mercy I desire, not sacrifice...

- Quote from Hosea 6:6
  - For I desire חֶסֶד and not sacrifice, the יָדַע of God rather than burnt offerings.
- Hesed
  - A choice not an emotion
  - Based on faithfulness
  - Leads to mercy, compassion, and grace
  - Exodus 20:6 - but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.
  - Psalm 136 – His love endures forever

24

The Framework of Discipleship

Study by Jonathan Kim Doctor of Ministry Candidate to research the Application of Personal Discipline in Discipleship in the Local Church

1

In this sessions we will

- understand what the protestant reformers and John Wesley had to say about personal discipline in discipleship
- reflect the major themes of discipleship and how they are related to personal spiritual disciplines
- reflect on whether the reformers and Wesley thought discipline was integral to discipleship

2

Theology

- The systematic study of the nature of God and religious belief
- The Bible is a story of God's redemption for mankind
- The Bible is a story of mankind's failure and path to redemption
- Theology is a way to make a framework or system to understand the story that is in the Bible.

3

Theology

- Our understanding of theology informs how we process our relationship with God
- Theology informs us about what how we view ourselves
- The more robust our theology the more we can process.
- Theology is not about what we say we believe but how we process and live out what we believe.

4

How did theology develop

- The letters of Paul, Peter, John, James, Jude
- The apostolic fathers – Clement, Polycarp,
- The Ante(pre)-Nicene Fathers - Justin Martyr, Irenaeus,
- The Post-Nicene Fathers - Augustine, Jerome
- The Protestant Reformers – Martin Luther, John Calvin
- Post Reformation Movements – Jonathan Edwards, John Wesley

5

Why does theology develop?

- To address something within the church
  - Paul's letter to the Galatian Church – Judaizers
  - Clement's letter to the church in Corinth – People were not listening to bishops
  - Writings of Irenaeus – Gnosticism
  - Writings of Augustine – Manichaeism
  - Writings of the Reformers – Works-Salvation
  - Writings of movements - Calvinism

6

Christian Discipleship

7

Sanctification Theology – The theology of what it means to be live a life as a Christian

- The framework that answers two questions
  - Am I saved?
  - If I am saved, what do I do?
- Being saved and works as a Christian are inseparable
- The issue is the order

8

There is something after you are "saved"

- Wesley (Sanctifying Grace)
  - "Christian Perfection" with the emphasis of achieving "Perfect Love"
- Calvin (The twofold grace of God)
  - "Regeneration" and continual "Renewal"
  - "Mortification" of sin and "Vivification" by Christ.
- Luther
  - "second kind of righteousness"
  - "proper righteousness"

9

Justification

- When we are "saved"
  - Holy in principle
- Wesley
  - "I believe justification to be wholly distinct from sanctification, and necessarily antecedent to it."
- Calvin
  - difference in forgiven status versus the process of transforming from our sinful condition. The grace of Christ
- Luther
  - true sanctification cannot occur without justification, sanctification can never be a means to justification

10

Justification => Sanctification

- Experience of God's hesed through Christ → Discipline in one's life to live out faith
- Delivered from the consequences of sin → Delivered from the consequences our sinful desires.
- Inward holiness → Outward holiness

11

Sanctification

- When we are "saved"
  - Holy in practice
- Wesley
  - The goal is to be delivered from our sinful desires.
  - Not try harder but look to God even more!
- Calvin
  - The work of the Holy Spirit
- Luther
  - The fruit of the Spirit
  - "mortifying the flesh and crucifying the self-centered desires."

12

Sanctification

- the Holy Spirit that changes the heart,
- Introspection that leads to a resentment of sin
- Human limitations that lead to a continued seeking for help
- Joy that comes from sanctification

13

The Holy Spirit

- When we experience God's hesed through Christ, we receive the Holy Spirit
- The Holy Spirit will urge us to change our thoughts and behaviors
- The circumcision of the heart (Wesley)
- the art of getting used to Justification (Luther)
- the Spirit of Regeneration who gives a newness of the mind and heart (Calvin)

14

Resentment of Sin

- Introspection of self constantly reminds us of our desire to lose discipline
- Fight with grieving the Spirit (Wesley)
- Mortifying the flesh and crucifying self-centered desires (Luther)
- The sunder is offended with himself on recognizing his perverseness and ingratitude to God (Calvin)

15

Human Limitations

- Discipline in Christian discipleship does not occur because we just try harder
- Even in "perfection" we make mistakes (Wesley)
- We cannot be perfect in the law because we are sinful (Luther)
- Repentance is only possible because God changes our hearts (Calvin)

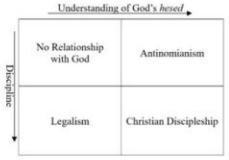
16

Joy

- Christian discipleship leads to great joy!
- The "perfect Christian" overflows in peace and joy (Wesley)
- This confidence and knowledge of divine grace makes a person happy, bold, and full of gladness in his relation to God and all creatures (Luther)
- When recognizing sin, joy comes from an understanding of mercy and grace of Christ (Calvin)

17

Christian Discipleship



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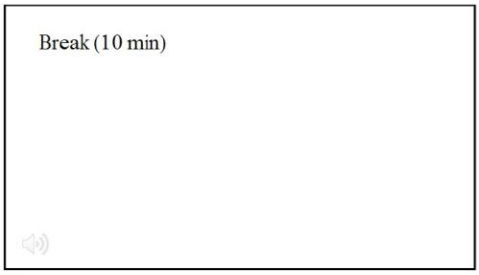
Break (10 min)

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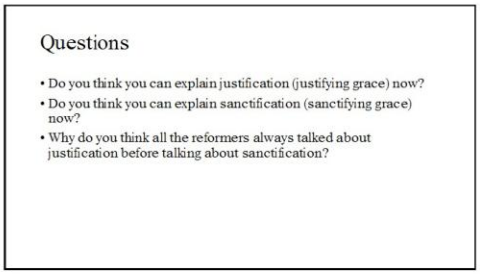
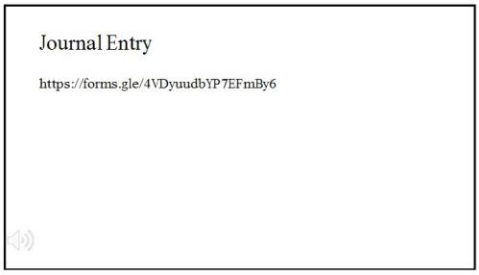

Questions
• Do you think you can explain justification (justifying grace) now?
• Do you think you can explain sanctification (sanctifying grace) now?
• Why do you think all the reformers always talked about justification before talking about sanctification?

20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21

A Case Study on Personal Discipline Implemented to Discipleship in the Local Church

Study by Jonathan Kim Doctor of Ministry Candidate to research the Application of Personal Discipline in Discipleship in the Local Church

1

In this sessions we will

- will understand the relationship between spiritual and personal discipline and the movement of the Holy Spirit
- will understand the relationship between hesed and discipline that played out in the Moravian church movement
- will reflect on the difference between local churches now and the Moravian church movement

2

The Moravian Movement

- Started by Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf, a pietist nobleman in Saxony.
- Moravians fleeing persecution in Bohemia and Moravia found refuge on Zinzendorf's estate in 1722 and built the community of Hermhut.
- Count Zinzendorf encouraged them to keep the discipline of the Unitas Fratrum,
- August 13, 1727, marked the culmination of a great spiritual renewal for the Moravian Church in Hermhut, and in 1732 the first missionaries were sent to the West indies.

3

The Start of the Moravian Movement

- Lutherans in Germany put emphasis teaching but it did not lead to a significant change in lifestyle and piety among its members.
- This led to the Pietist movement which put an emphasis on the practice of faith
- Zinzendorf created a community based on these values as he received Moravians and German Lutherans who wanted to be a part of the movement

4

The Discipleship Pathway

- The understanding of hesed (God's love)
- Spiritual disciplines
  - Prayer
  - Fellowship
  - Singing
  - Witness
  - Finances

5

Experiencing Hesed

- Moravian movement started in the "Golden Summer" of 1727
- Was based on prayer and singing
- The main theme was a deep repentance of sinfulness and helplessness

6

Experiencing Hesed – 1727 Statutes of Herrnhut

- 3. These are the characteristics of a member of the body of Christ which we in Herrnhut, ...: Whosoever does not profess to be affected by God's mere mercy in Christ and is unable to live without it for a single moment, ...and whosoever does not in earnest show a daily need for his sin to be taken away and to become holier every day and more similar to the original image of God, ...he is truly not a brother.

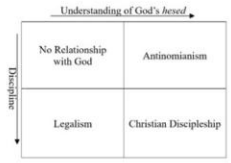
7

Experiencing Hesed – 1727 Statutes of Herrnhut

- There is no discipline without first experiencing the love of God.
- There is no experience of the love of God if there is no discipline.
- Discipline is not the reason for receiving the love of God.

8

Christian Discipleship



9

Prayer

- Prayer Night Watch
- Hourly Prayer
  - Convenient times
  - Inconvenient times
- Basis of the community

10

Singing

- Sungstunde – Singing meeting
- Praying and singing together
- Singing as a response
- Intentionality to not stick out

11

Fellowship

- Love feast
- Bands
  - Confidentiality
  - Commitment to God
- Voluntary but high accountability
  - No one forced unless congregational matter
  - Friendly discipline

12

Witness

- Witness in Germany
- Witness in the US – Georgia
  - School for Native American Children in South Carolina
- Witness in Pennsylvania
- Christian Unity and Equality
- Hated denominational moving

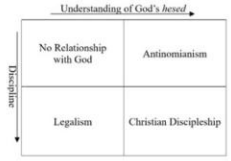
13

Finances

- Relationship dynamics
- Rules against unhealthy financial practices
  - Loan repayment schedules
  - Credit limits
  - Reason for getting loans

14

Christian Discipleship



15

Break (10 min)

16

Questions

- Do you think a movement like the Moravian church can happen in our church? Why?

17

Journal Entry

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18

A Practical Approach to Discipline and Discipleship

Study by Jonathan Kim Doctor of Ministry Candidate to research the Application of Personal Discipline in Discipleship in the Local Church

1

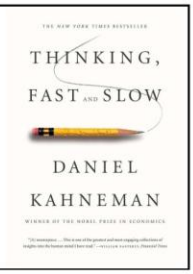
In this sessions we will

- understand why we do the things we do even though we want to do something different
- reflect on how a complete biblical understanding is important to applying discipline in discipleship
- reflect whether this framework of Behavioral Economics is applicable to my daily life

2

Behavioral Economics

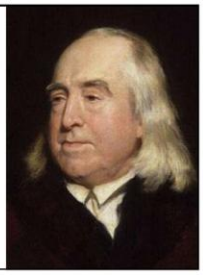
- Why do people make "dumb" decisions?
- Why do people not adapt spiritual or personal disciplines even though they know that they should?



3

Utility Theory – Our default framework

- A rational decision is one that increases the overall happiness (utility) in one's life.
- Issues
  - Ignores prior experiences
  - Overemphasizes results
    - Can we really evaluate the results?
    - Jeremy Bentham – decisions are made to "add to the sum total of his pleasures"



4

Jesus Says…

- Luke 9:23 Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.
- John 16:12-13 "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

5

Prospect Theory – the Alternative

- It is not the result but the prospect of something happening that dictates our choice.
  - Framing effects – the prospect of losing has more weight than the prospect of winning
  - Nonlinear preferences – Just because a prospect is more likely to happen, it does not proportionately influence the decision maker
  - Source dependence – we prefer prospects when the situation is more well known
  - Risk Seeking – the prospect of winning something big generally outweighs the small sure loss
  - Loss aversion – we disproportionately avoid the prospect of losing

6

Framing Effects

- Jesus talks about hell just as much as he talks about heaven
  - Mark 9:47-49 And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, where "'the worms that eat them do not die, and the fire is not quenched.' (Is 66:24) Everyone will be salted with fire.

7

Nonlinear Preferences

- Even when they saw Jesus and his miracles, they still did not believe
  - Matthew 12:41 The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now something greater than Jonah is here.

8

Source dependence

- Jesus talks about those who will not see him as the direct source
  - John 20:29 Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

9

Risk Seeking

- The kingdom of heaven is portrayed as something very big and rewarding
  - Matthew 13:44-46 "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

10

Risk Seeking

- Faith is framed with large upside
  - Mt 17:20 He replied, "Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."

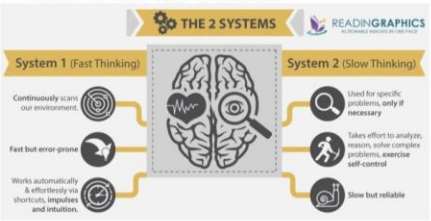
11

Loss aversion

- Jesus makes it clear to those who follow him that there will be a great loss
  - Luke 16:25-26 "But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.'

12

Then what do we do?


THE 2 SYSTEMS
READINGGRAPHICS
System 1 (Fast Thinking)
System 2 (Slow Thinking)
Continuously scans our environment.
Fast but error-prone
Works automatically & effortlessly via shortcuts, impulses and intuition.
Used for specific problems, only if necessary
Takes effort to analyze, reason, solve complex problems, exercise self-control
Slow but reliable

13

Decision to become a disciple

- System 2 cognition
  - Intentional judgement
  - Does not necessarily dictate a system1 cognition response
  - Wrong information in System 2 cognition will result incorrect system 1 cognition

14

Discipleship as a movement from system 2 to system 1 thinking

- Adapting a discipline is to make that discipline into a habit.
- The process of making system1 and system 2 thinking in sync
- Discipline as a way of practicing knowing to doing

15

Why disciplined people can become more religious quickly

- Understanding of how to shift things from system 2 cognition to system 1 cognition
- It is important to be aware of this process!

16

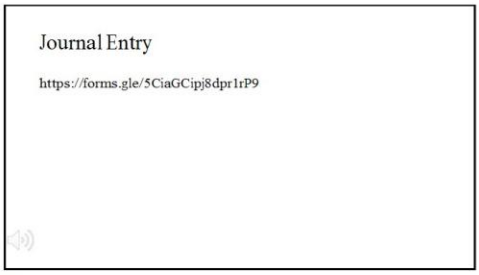
Break (10 min)

17

Questions

- What do you think of the phrase "just try harder?"

18



19

Debrief and Final Reflections

Study by Jonathan Kim Doctor of Ministry Candidate to research the Application of Personal Discipline in Discipleship in the Local Church

1

In this sessions we will

- ask the pastor any questions that I may have
- will have a moment to reflect and share my honest thoughts with those who participated in the study and the pastor

2

Questions?

- Things I want more clarity on
- Things I want more details on
- What will happen now?

3

The relationship between discipline and grace

- Let's talk about your thoughts
  - What are some things that were new to you?
  - Are there new perspectives you gained through our study?

4

Christian Discipleship

- Is discipleship more important to you now?
  - Discipleship was defined in this study as an understanding of grace AND spiritual discipline. Do you agree?
  - What more do you think is a part of discipleship?

5

Journal Entry

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6

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